

In These Times

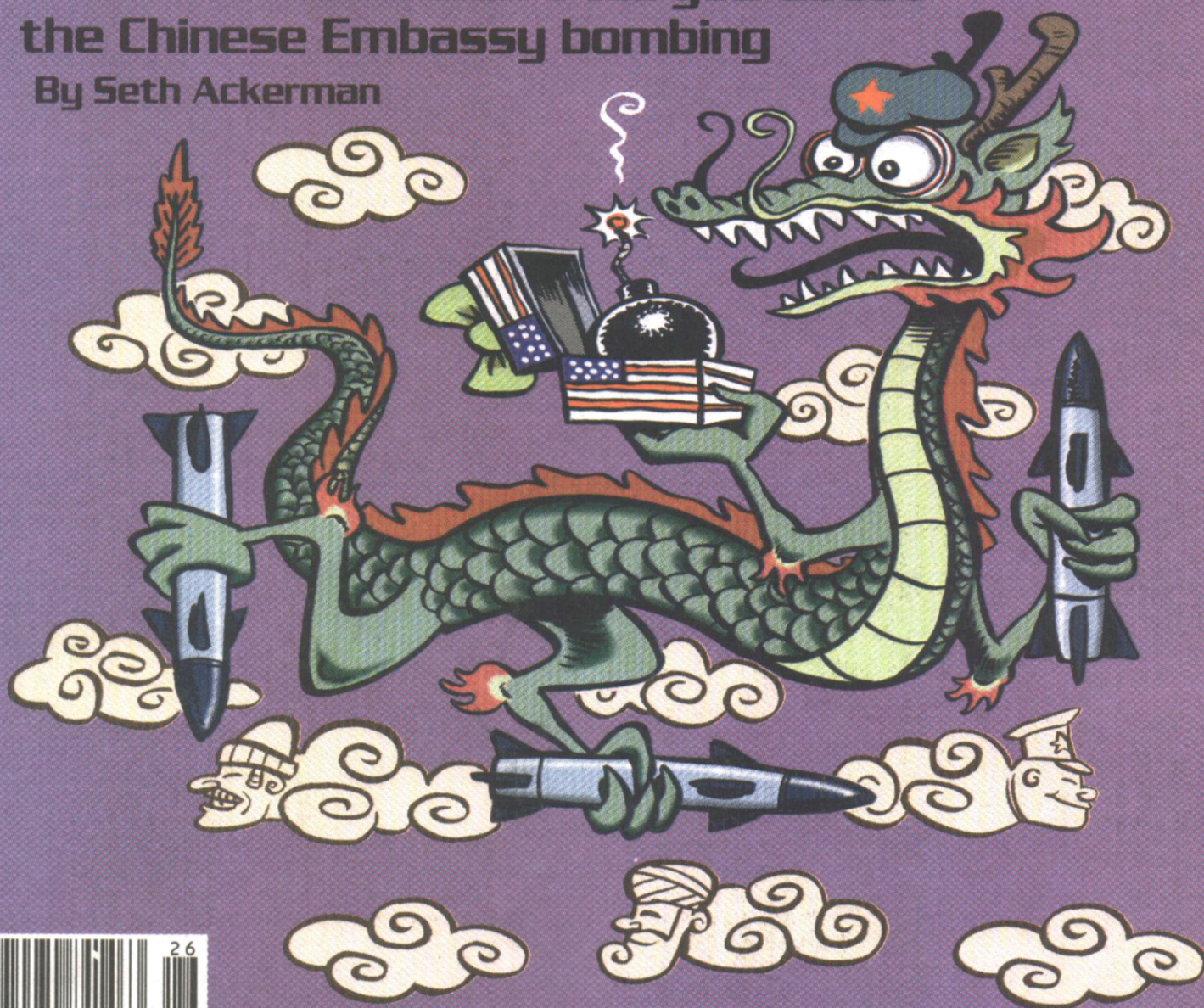
INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

June 26, 2000

Mission: Implausible

What the media didn't tell you about
the Chinese Embassy bombing

By Seth Ackerman



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In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

"... with liberty and justice for all"

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Interns: Sheryl Fred, Erin Ralston

Art Director: Jim Rinnert

Associate Art Director: Steve Anderson

Illustrator: Terry LaBan

Publisher: Beth Schulman

Associate Publisher: Julie Fain

Circulation Manager: Luli Buxton

Advertising Director: Steve Anderson

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All correspondence should be sent to: 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647.
Phone: (773) 772-0100. Fax: (773) 772-4180.
E-mail: itt@inthesetimes.com.

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Letters

Capital Colony

As one of the suffering colonists in our nation's capital, I thank Jason Vest for his article highlighting the plight of the people of the District of Columbia ("Capital Crimes," May 15). Most Americans do not realize that while the United States proclaims itself the capital of democracy, the people living in the very shadow of the Capitol dome have no representation in Congress. We in D.C. are not quite like the residents of Puerto Rico and Guam, however; in those places, the colonists are exempt from federal taxes. Meanwhile, we in the District subsidize our own subjugation by paying more federal taxes per capita than residents of 49 states.

A growing grassroots movement in the District is demanding the same rights as all other Americans (see www.standupfordemocracy.org). But for our struggle to succeed, we need support across the country. Vest's article helps in that cause, and for that I am grateful.

Bill Mosley
Washington

Here and Now

I read with interest Salim Muwakkil's article calling for reparations for the effects of slavery in the United States ("The Big Payback," May 15). No one can dispute that there was great inhumanity and economic damage inflicted on African-Americans. But the same can be said for American Indians, many of whom lost their lives, their land, their possessions and their language. Rather than focusing on historic injustices, I think it would be more useful to focus on injustices continuing today: inequities in education, health, employment opportunities and in the distribution of pollutants, for example. These ongoing injustices can and must be remedied and will provide a more effective rallying point for social action.

Bruce Poster
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Opposite Poles

In his reply to my letter (May 15), Jeff Sharlet admits the validity of my statements about the role of Poles as righteous gentiles during World War II and as victims of the Nazis.

Yet he contradicts these facts when, without citing any evidence, he repeats the claim of "mass Polish participation in the fascist slaughter of Jews, Roma and gays," as if the Nazis needed or wanted Polish assistance. Without denying the existence of anti-Semitism in Poland, one must assert that collaboration with

the German enemy during the war existed on a far smaller scale than in many other countries and that claims of "mass" participation betray a prejudice, not a familiarity, with the history of Nazi-occupied Poland.

John J. Kulczycki
Professor of History
University of Illinois
Chicago

Jeff Sharlet's reply to John J. Kulczycki's letter was even more disturbing than the original provocation ("How the East Was Won," April 3). I've never before seen the Polish libel extended to include mass murder of Roma and gays as well as Jews.

Unlike the members of other national groups, Poles were not involved in running the concentration camps and did not contribute military formations to the Waffen SS. The despised Polish "blue" police were less implicated in the roundup and killing of Jews than similar forces elsewhere in Eastern Europe. The Poles did not have a Quisling government. The Polish government did not surrender when the country was overrun, and it agitated consistently for severe reprisals against Germany in response to the mass killing of Polish Jews—the only Allied government to take such a stance.

It was the major Western powers—well informed by Polish military intelligence of what was happening—that had the capacity to do something. Yet it was they that failed to act, not the terrorized and destitute peasant masses of Poland. The assertion of "mass Polish participation in the fascist slaughter of Jews" and others is a false generalization of mythic proportion.

Bob Lamming
Berkeley, California

Jeff Sharlet replies: The Polish pogroms against Jews, the Polish resistance's refusal to supply arms to the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, Polish postwar theft of Jewish property and murder of returning Jews, and Polish acquiescence to the location of the death camps in their territories is not "Polish libel," it's Polish history. For evidence on Polish cooperation in the location of the death camps see Martin Gilbert's *A History of the Twentieth Century*: "The chief representative of the [Polish] General Government urged [the Germans] that 'the final solution of this question should begin in the General Government, where transportation problems play only a minor role, and questions pertaining to deployment of labour would not impede the course of this operation.'"

In These Times

Volume 24, Number 15

June 26, 2000

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2 Editorial By Pat Aufderheide
Open access or else.

3 News
Hoffa cleans up, Steelworkers take on Titan Tire
and Czechs teach tolerance for the Roma.

6 Appall-o-Meter By David Futrelle

8 The Flanders Files By Laura Flanders
The new federalist revolution.

Features

10 Africa in Agony
By G. Pascal Zachary
Can Africans solve their own problems?
Plus: Radio free Burundi.

14 Mission: Implausible
By Seth Ackerman
What the media didn't tell you about the Chinese
Embassy bombing.

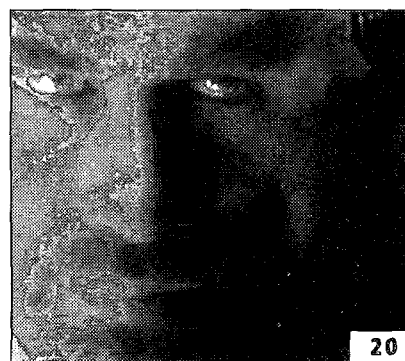
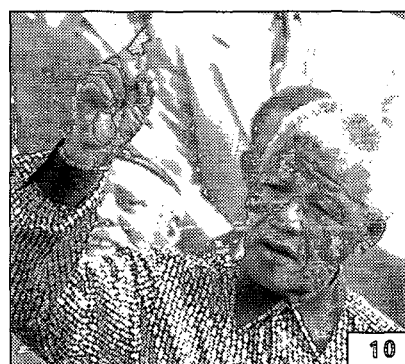
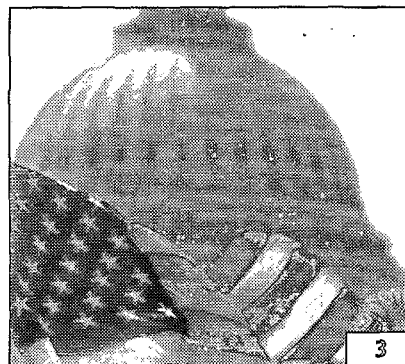
16 Trading Places
By David Moberg
China trade deals a blow to labor.

18 Germany's New Identity
By David Bacon
For immigrants, there is power in a union.

20 Psychlo Babble
By Scott McLemee
FILM: The metaphysics of *Battlefield Earth*.

22 All Things New
By Eugene McCarraher
BOOKS: Slavoj Zizek's *The Fragile Absolute*.

25 Summer Reading
Some of our recent favorites.



Cover illustration by Terry LaBan

Open Access or Else

By Pat Aufderheide

The proposed merger between America Online and Time Warner could well transform surfing the Net into a paddleboat trip on a corporate pond.

Years of exuberant capitalism have expanded the potential of the Internet for democratic as well as commercial communication. But today's Internet rides on a phone system that cannot meet the needs of today's users, who want fast downloading speeds and video. AOL and Time Warner want to team up and offer instant Web access. But theirs is a Faustian bargain. In exchange for access to their high-speed cable lines, the company could powerfully influence what you can see and access on the Web.

Cable companies have been developing broadband (much faster) Internet service and want all customers to go through their service to reach other Internet service providers (ISPs), meaning customers would have to pay twice and competition would be killed off. AOL used to champion open access to the cable system, demanding that cable companies open up their broadband services to competing ISPs. Small entrepreneurs and public interest and consumer groups joined the crusade.

But the battle lines were redrawn in January, when AOL solved its problem with cash: It bought the country's largest cable company, Time Warner. AOL instantly dropped its demands for a public open-access policy, suddenly confident that the market would regulate itself.

The merger, the largest in corporate history, would create the biggest media company in the world and is now waiting the approval of the Federal Communications Commission. This new behemoth would have the unique potential to design the communications future in its own favor. Here's why: AOL is the largest ISP in the world, with 40 percent of U.S. accounts. Time Warner both produces programming (CNN, HBO, Cartoon Network, Warner Brothers) and distributes it via its WB broadcast network and its huge

cable business. Time Warner also controls the second-largest broadband Internet service, called Road Runner.

Together, the two of them have every reason to tailor consumer Internet use to their own benefit. They could rig the speed of transmission so that their services come to you quicker, or store (cache) the Web sites they favor, so they load quicker than the competition. They could make sure AOL Time Warner services pop right up on the first screen you see on your computer. They could limit the ability to send video, so that users can't even dream of offering alternative programs or services. In short, AOL Time Warner could turn today's Internet users—people who can either create their own programs or choose what programs they view and services they use or offer—right back into yesterday's captive consumer audience. This would not only nip competition in the bud, but prevent entire new adventures in

low-cost communication from getting off the ground. And that would be bad for democracy.

Consumer and public interest advocates, including the Consumers Union, Consumer Federation of America, Media Access Project and Center for Media Education, are outraged. Their unlikely ally is Walt Disney. A huge media conglomerate, which owns ABC, cable channels and a movie studio, Disney turned out to be the little guy in a contract dispute with Time Warner in May. To bring Disney to terms, Time Warner simply pulled ABC programs from the systems of millions of viewers. It was a chilling harbinger.

AOL Time Warner could turn today's Internet users right back into yesterday's captive consumer audience.

We must not become hostages to any cable company's broadband Internet service. The FCC should support the creativity, entrepreneurship and civic activity that a free and open Internet makes possible by preventing the merger of AOL and Time Warner. But if it fails to protect the public interest, open access to broadband cable will be a demand we must make heard on Capitol Hill, in state legislatures and before every city council that grants a cable franchise. ■

SOCIAL SECURITY 2037

Terry LaBan



Mr. Clean

Hoffa says it's time for the union to police itself

By Jane Slaughter

DETROIT—When the history of the labor movement in the early 21st century is written, James P. Hoffa may be remembered as the man who brought Pat Buchanan to a union rally.

When the AFL-CIO called a demonstration and lobbying day in Washington on April 12 against permanent normal trade relations with China, the Teamsters held their own rally. Buchanan, the probable Reform Party presidential candidate, told the Teamsters that, if elected, he'd tell Chinese officials: "You stop persecuting Christians, you stop threatening my country, or you guys have sold your last pair of chopsticks in any mall in the United States."

If elected, Buchanan promised to make Hoffa his chief trade negotiator. Though George W. Bush also met recently with Hoffa to seek his endorsement, the Teamsters leader's real concern isn't presidential politics. It's internal Teamsters matters—including making sure he's re-elected in 2001 and ending government oversight of Teamsters elections.

Hoffa's recent willingness to reach out to the right and a desire to end the consent decree that brought about oversight have created some strange bedfellows. In April, the Teamsters endorsed the re-election bid of anti-labor Rep. Peter Hoekstra (R-Mich.), who voted against all nine of the Teamsters' key legislative issues last year. But Hoekstra was the congressman who led the investigation of former Teamsters President Ron Carey, which led to Hoffa's election. Hoekstra also has crusaded to end the 11-year supervision of the union by the government. "We realize what his voting record is, and we

also realize that the Democrats have not done a whole lot to help us out with the consent decree," says Bill Black, the union's Michigan legislative director. Black called the endorsement "right for the overall big picture for this union."

Hoffa insists that the union is now clean and members no longer need an independent appeals process to rectify campaign violations, such as intimidation of voters or illegal donations. To bolster his case, he has set up an anti-corruption program called RISE (Respect, Integrity, Strength, Ethics). The *New York Times* called it "the most ambitious anti-corruption program in decades."

But critics say the program is no more than a PR stunt that has little intention of cleaning up the union. "It's an absolute sham," says Ashley McNeeley,

Hoffa's likely opponent next year, Tom Leedham, a local president in Portland, Oregon. Teninty made recommendations for the code of conduct: to ban multiple salaries, to require that stewards be elected and to use mail ballots in local union elections (to decrease intimidation). All were rejected.

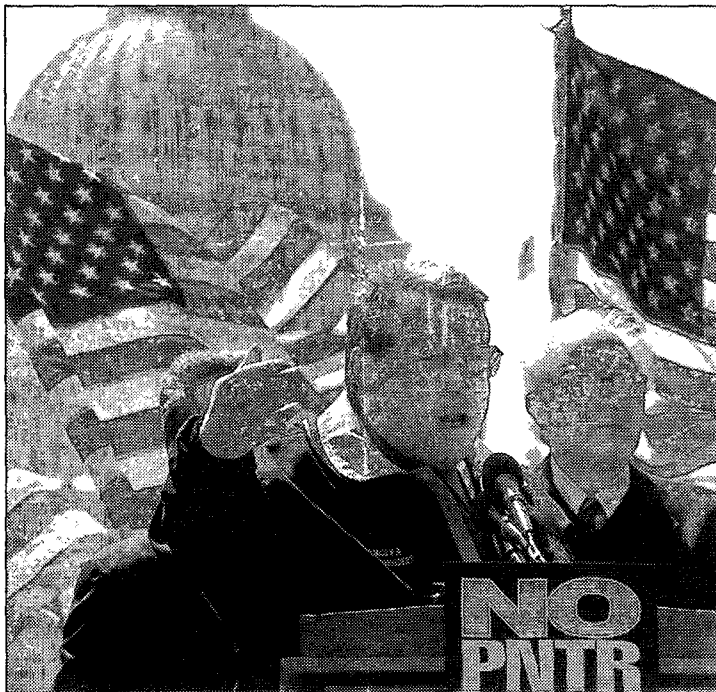
Instead, the vast majority of the draft code of conduct simply repeats provisions that are already part of federal law (e.g., no embezzlement). The task force recommended all complaints be heard by appointees of the union president. They also suggested the code should not set maximum salaries for officials, limit multiple salaries, "contain any restrictions on nepotism" or prohibit "no-show jobs." No-show jobs, of course, are illegal; in 1986, former Teamsters President

Jackie Presser was indicted for having ghost employees on the payroll.

It's obvious why the task force wouldn't touch multiple salaries: Hoffa has appointed 82 supporters to various titles that draw an extra salary and pension on top of their existing jobs. Twenty of 22 Hoffa supporters on the executive board take multiple salaries. Campaigning in 1998, Hoffa promised to cap all union officials' salaries, including his own, at \$150,000. Today he draws \$200,000, and a few dozen other officials make more than \$150,000.

As the task force deliberates, Hoffa continues his ethically suspect

practices. He overturned two local union elections won by reform candidates. He put two local unions into trusteeship when it appeared that reformers were about to win elections, and he even dissolved one outright to prevent such a win. In four cases he has appointed "personal representatives" to local unions where reformers have been elected. These staffers have replaced TDU members with Hoffa supporters, threatening the locals with trusteeship if they don't play ball.



Teamsters President James P. Hoffa

a Northwest Airlines flight attendant from Honolulu, who is a leader of Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), the 24-year-old reform caucus that has been highly critical of RISE.

To head his anti-corruption effort, Hoffa hired former federal prosecutor Ed Stier and appointed a 22-member task force to draft a code of conduct for the union. Twenty-one of those members belong to Hoffa's executive board or are close associates of his slate. Just one member, Ron Teninty, is a supporter of

Hoffa's lawyers also attempted to change the election rules in his favor by trying to limit the activities of TDU. Their draft set of rules would have restricted caucuses that are not primarily election organizations—like TDU—from participating in Teamsters elections. If TDU wished to participate, the proposed rules said, it would have to reveal the names of all its members—a clear invitation for retribution. Other Hoffa proposals would have taken away members' right to campaign in employer parking lots—the principal way that non-incumbents reach rank and filers. TDU argued successfully against these changes to the federal election monitor, but Hoffa did succeed in raising the limit on campaign contributions to \$2,000 for members and \$10,000 for candidates. This will no doubt favor well-off incumbents.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, who more or less openly backed Carey against Hoffa in the 1996 election, has been anxious to mend fences with the Teamsters president. The federation has given the Teamsters \$500,000 for the RISE project and has forgiven loans of at least \$1 million. The AFL-CIO has also provided the Teamsters with \$600,000 for the Overnite strike, now in its eighth month.

Some are asking whether the AFL-CIO's largesse is connected to an omission in the Teamsters' recent civil suit against Carey and his campaign consultants, charging them with racketeering and embezzlement in the 1996 campaign. Although federation secretary-treasurer Richard Trumka helped divert Teamsters money into Carey's campaign through the AFL-CIO, neither Trumka nor the federation was named in the suit.

The next Teamsters convention will be held in Las Vegas in June 2001, followed by a vote for top officers in the fall. While Hoffa can expect support from the great majority of officers, many in the rank and file remain unimpressed with his record or RISE. "The enforcement mechanism is really a sham because the judge and jury is still the incumbent administration," says Erik Jensen, a member of a public employees local in Minneapolis. "A corrupt administration is not going to police itself." ■

Clash of the Titan

After two years on strike, Steelworkers keep fighting

By David Moberg

CHICAGO—Outside a southwest neighborhood branch of Harris Bank, three men passed around a bulbous cup with a metal straw, pouring hot water into the mass of green herbs and sipping *maté*, a Uruguayan drink. They were standing in front of this bank, far from home, to provide support for a thousand workers in Iowa and Mississippi who have been fighting for two years against a boss with an oversized ego, a deep-seated hostility to unions and a bottom-feeder style of management—Maurice "Morry" Taylor, CEO of Titan International, one of the world's leading manufacturers of agricultural and off-road tires and wheels. It was an odd sight, but it reflected an increasingly common reality: As workers and their unions develop more sophisticated ways to combat intransigent employers, their alliances and targets become ever more wide-ranging.

As the *maté* drinkers sought shelter from the chilly, mid-May drizzle, they were joined by leaders of neighborhood and religious groups and local politicians, all protesting Harris Bank's poor record of lending to homeowners and small businesses in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods—as well as the bank's extension of \$175 million in credit to Titan. The money enabled Taylor—who ran a flamboyant vanity campaign for the 1996 Republican presidential nomination—to drag out his fight with Steelworkers at Titan tire plants in Des Moines, Iowa and Natchez, Mississippi.

When 670 Des Moines tire workers went on strike in May 1998, they wanted an end to horrendous working conditions—such as a schedule working people for 26 days straight without a day off, often for 12 hours a day, the elimination of two-tier wages and some pension improvements. The workers in Natchez were forced to strike a few months later when Taylor, after negotiating a Titan takeover of the plant from another company he also controlled, refused to rehire the old work force or respect their con-

tract. Although the Iowa workers' charges of unfair labor practices were recently sustained by an administrative law judge, Taylor has showed little interest in negotiating a settlement.

The three men from Uruguay, leaders in their union, were in the United States to protest Taylor's abuse of their factory, which he acquired two years ago during a wave of privatization, and its workers—some of whom Taylor brought, under the pretense of "training," to act as strike-breakers at the Des Moines plant, until the Uruguayan union stopped such transnational scabbing. In a deal typical of Taylor's shady financial manipulation, he sold most of his holdings in FUNSA, the Uruguayan tire plant, to a company nominally controlled by his close relatives. But the company is still under his control through Titan.

The Uruguayan unionists came here not only to find out who really owned the plant, but to express solidarity with their North American counterparts. "The economy is globalizing itself," says Luiz Romero, president of the Federation of Uruguayan Rubber Workers, "and we have to globalize our solidarity and unionism."

After their action in Chicago, part of a larger challenge to Harris Bank's lending practices during a review of its compliance with the Community Reinvestment Act, the Uruguayans joined Steelworkers in a protest at Titan's annual meeting at its Quincy, Illinois headquarters. On May 18, the night before the stockholders' meeting, 75 workers gathered in front of the Titan mansion while Taylor sat on the porch, demeaning the intelligence of the striking workers to a local reporter and describing their prayer vigil as "a little bit entertaining." Despite heavy police guard the next day, many Steelworkers were able to question Taylor about practices that had cost the company dearly, and the union won a remarkably high 41 percent of shareholder votes for a proposal to change election of the board of directors to make it more accountable.

Steelworkers then accompanied the Uruguayan unionists home, where they warned the government about Taylor's corrupt dealings. Uruguay is currently considering Taylor's requests for subsidies for the FUNSA plant. Meanwhile, one of Taylor's FUNSA partners—a former Uruguayan government official—is

under investigation for money laundering, according to Argentine press reports.

None of these actions are likely to prove decisive in the Steelworkers' long conflict with Taylor. But the cumulative effect of the strikes has taken its toll. The market value of Titan has dropped by more than \$250 million over the past two years and the company is barely profitable. In April, Titan sold two factories to Carlisle, a competitor that had contemplated buying the entire company last year. But this short-term fix may not help Titan in the long run. It is beleaguered not only by weak agricultural markets, but also by lawsuits, safety violations and a potential backlash against abuse of public subsidies.

An unskilled, unstable work force has undermined productivity and quality, and the union has publicized the company's problems to customers, investors and Wall Street analysts. A decision by Harris to limit loans to Titan would seriously hamper the already shaky business.

Many say resolution to the conflict may require finding a new owner for the company. "There's no doubt in any of our minds that we'll prevail," says Natchez union trustee Fred Frost. "We'll end up with a good contract and

a good job with Taylor or somebody else. We're willing to talk to him any time he wants, but he doesn't want to, and he's running the company into the ground for only one reason, to break our union. His ego has gotten in the way of good business sense." ■

Roma Wrongs

Czech Republic launches a campaign for racial tolerance

By Tony Wesolowsky

PRAGUE—Pavel Vondra stands motionless, his eyes intently scanning the captions accompanying a series of black-and-white photos and drawings. Under a weather-worn tent tucked away on a quiet square, the 24-year-old Czech is getting his first lesson in Roma history, most of it a tragic tale spanning centuries. "I really like this exhibit a lot," he says of the "Seven Days of Roma Culture" display, part of the Czech government's new \$250,000 campaign to counter prejudice against Roma. "It's too bad it wasn't here earlier, because we know very little about Roma history."

Some of Vondra's compatriots don't exactly share his enthusiasm. "I know enough about them," snickers one woman, as she and a friend quickly make their way past the tent. A man in his mid-twenties scoffs at the notion of the Roma having a history at all. "I'm not interested in the Roma, Gypsy, whatever you want to call it, issue. O.K.?"

Historically, the Roma have been Europe's most disadvantaged ethnic group. Five million Roma live in Central and Eastern Europe, where most of them settled after migrating from northeastern India about 1,000 years ago. A March report by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) notes that discrimination and exclusion are fundamental aspects of the Roma experience. "Ten years after the Iron Curtain fell, Europe is at risk of being divided by new walls," warns Walter Kemp, author of the report. "Front and center among those persons being left outside Europe's new security and prosperity are the Roma."

The OSCE and the U.S. State Department, along with nongovernmental organizations like Amnesty International, regularly criticize the Czech government for doing little to better the lot of Roma, who routinely face discrimination in housing, employment, education and adequate police protection. Western officials have hinted that Prague's poor record on race could complicate the country's bid to join the European Union.

In response, the Czech Republic has launched some anti-discrimination efforts. In February, the Czech government set aside more than \$500,000 for Roma-related social and educational programs, marking the first time an ethnic minority has been granted its own item in the Czech budget. The country's top official in charge of human rights, Peter Uhl, has proposed establishing a special department for Roma rights and other ethnic minorities. In a major breakthrough, last year the government also amended the odious 1993 Czech citizenship law, which had denied citizenship to thousands of Roma following the split with Slovakia.

The media, which routinely portray Roma as thieves and deadbeats bent on abusing social welfare, have changed their attitudes, too. Czech state-run television now regularly airs programs on

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

SURE, THE REVIEWS HAVE BEEN LOUSY! THAT'S BECAUSE THE LIBERAL MEDIA DON'T WANT YOU TO SEE ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT MOVIES OF OUR AGE--

BATTLEFIELD WASHINGTON

A SAGA OF THE YEAR 2000*

*BASED ON THE WORK OF L. RONALD REAGAN, FOUNDER OF THE CHURCH OF REPUBLICANOLOGY!

YOU'LL CHEER AS A DASHING YOUNG REBEL VENTURES FORTH FROM HIS SIMPLE HOMETOWN AND BECOMES A LEADER IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST TYRANNY!

WE MUST NOT FIGHT, JOHN MCCAIN! WE MUST JOIN FORCES TO DEFEAT THE DEVILS-WHO-RULE!

YEAH, YEAH, ALL RIGHT...WHATEVER...

YOU'LL GASP AT THE SHOCKING ARROGANCE OF THE EVIL DEMOCRAT OVERLORD AND HIS SCHEMING SECOND-IN-COMMAND!

PATHETIC REPUBLICANS! I SHOULD CRUSH THEM LIKE THE INSECTS THEY ARE!

THE FOOL! SOON HIS POWER WILL BE MINE!

AND YOU'LL BE ON THE EDGE OF YOUR SEAT AS THE FINAL CONFRONTATION NEARS ITS CLIMAX--WITH THE FATE OF A NATION HANGING IN THE BALANCE!

VOTE FOR GORE, STUPID MAN-ANIMALS--OR BE DESTROYED!

NO! RISE UP--FOR SCHOOL VOUCHERS! AND FAITH-BASED INITIATIVES!

DEBATE 2000

AND SOME OTHER STUFF MY ADVISORS TOLD ME TO SAY!

REPUBLICANOLOGY WILL SET YOU FREE!

www.thismodernworld.com

Roma culture, and recently hired its very first Roma news anchor.

Despite these strides, the Czechs still have a long way to go before they can be considered champions of equal rights. Seventy-five percent of Roma children are inappropriately shipped off to schools for the learning disabled, according to the Budapest-based European Roma Rights Center. And violence is rampant: Between 1994 and 1997, there were 700 racially motivated attacks targeting Roma and other dark-skinned people, the Prague-based Host Movement for Civic Solidarity reports. Still, the Czech Republic has yet to pass a law explicitly outlawing racial discrimination by public institutions and agencies.

It is especially difficult to imagine equal rights for Roma when racism is so commonplace in Czech society. A January poll

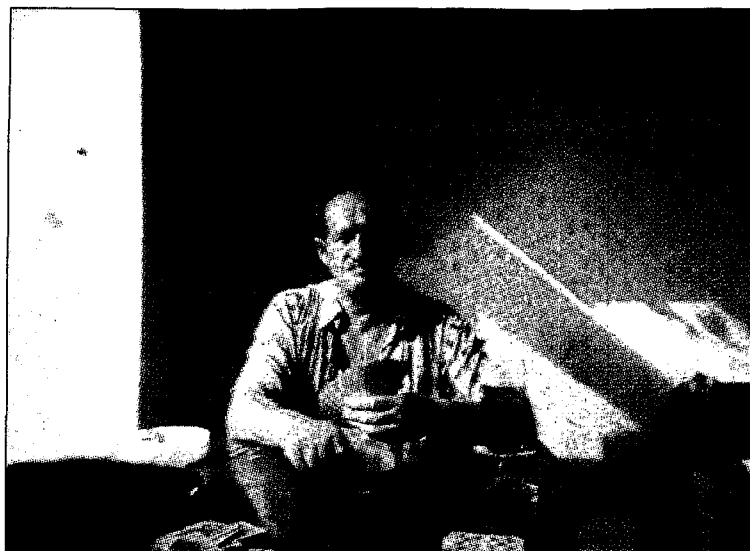
found that 50 percent of Czechs felt "antipathy toward Roma." Pollster Ladislav Koppl says the poll indicates a growing intolerance in the Czech Republic toward not only Roma, but also toward immigrants, namely Arabs, Russians, Ukrainians and Vietnamese. The same poll found that the Czech Republic's festering neo-Nazi skinhead movement has silent but significant support among the general public.

promoting tolerance toward the Roma appeared on walls throughout Prague. Within weeks, however, most of the billboards had been defaced with racist graffiti.

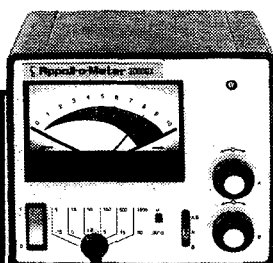
Jan Jarab, a spokesman for the Ministry of Human Rights, is convinced the latest effort will end differently. "The Czechs don't know their own, let alone Roma, culture," he says. "We're trying to break down barriers between people. It's a first step." ■

Such findings leave little hope for the latest Czech anti-racism campaign. Among the biggest doubters are the Roma themselves. "Of course it's not a bad idea if the government wants to fight against xenophobia and racism," says Ondrej Gina, leader of the Roma rights group Gremia. "The question is how. The present campaign of mostly billboards and TV ads has been poorly developed. No one even knows what they're about."

A similar campaign failed miserably three years ago, when billboards



Muj Svet (My World), an exhibition of photographs by Roma children living in the Czech Republic, was on display this spring at New York's Czech Center. This untitled portrait was taken by Daniel Horvath, age 11, from Chanov, a city in northern Bohemia.



Save the Sails 4.2

A California activist sailing from San Francisco to Yokohama, Japan in an attempt to dramatize the plight of the world's whales was forced to head for port in Honolulu—after his boat ran into one of the noble beasts. Michael Reppy's voyage was hampered by steering problems almost from the start—but it wasn't until the 10th day of the voyage that he realized the trouble with his rudder must have been caused by a late night encounter he had with a couple of whales the first night out. "I feel stupid for taking so long to find the rudder problem—which is obviously the cause of the steering problems I have been having," he wrote in a message on his Web site at www.tchild.org. "And of course there is the irony of sailing to save whales and running into them."

Appall-o-Meter

By David Futrelle

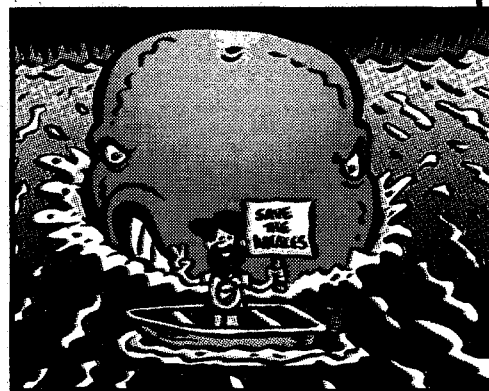
Sea of Tranquility 6.7

After you shuffle off this mortal coil, do you dream of being blasted to a final resting place on the surface of the moon? If so, you're in luck: Celestis Inc., a Texas company famous for lobbying the remains of such celebrities as Timothy Leary and Gene Roddenberry into deep space, has announced plans to offer 200 lucky dead people the chance to ride in a rocket designed to crash-land on the lunar surface, all for the low, low price of \$12,500. "The funeral industry is changing dramatically," company co-founder Charlie Chafer recently explained to The Associated Press. "The baby boomers want to do things a little differently."

Bang, Zoom! 9.0

Speaking of shooting things at the moon: The Associated Press reports that

the U.S. government seriously considered blasting the moon with an atomic bomb in the '50s to scare the Russians (provided it didn't blow up on the launch pad). A young Carl Sagan—then an astronomy grad student—even helped out with some of the calculations. "Now it seems ridiculous and unthinkable," says physicist Leonard Reiffel, a former NASA official who headed up the project. "But things were remarkably tense back then."



WHAT THE MEDIA ISN'T TELLING YOU

About Bertelsmann's Hidden Nazi Past In an exposé trumpeted coast to coast, *The Nation* revealed that Bertelsmann - the largest book publisher in the U.S. - has carefully hidden its stalwart complicity with the Third Reich.

About the Secret History of Lead In an exhaustive special report, *The Nation* showed how General Motors, Standard Oil and Du Pont colluded to make and market gasoline containing lead - a deadly poison - although there were safe alternatives. Abetted by the US government, they suppressed scientific evidence that lead kills. Still sold in countries all over the world, leaded gasoline continues to poison the planet.

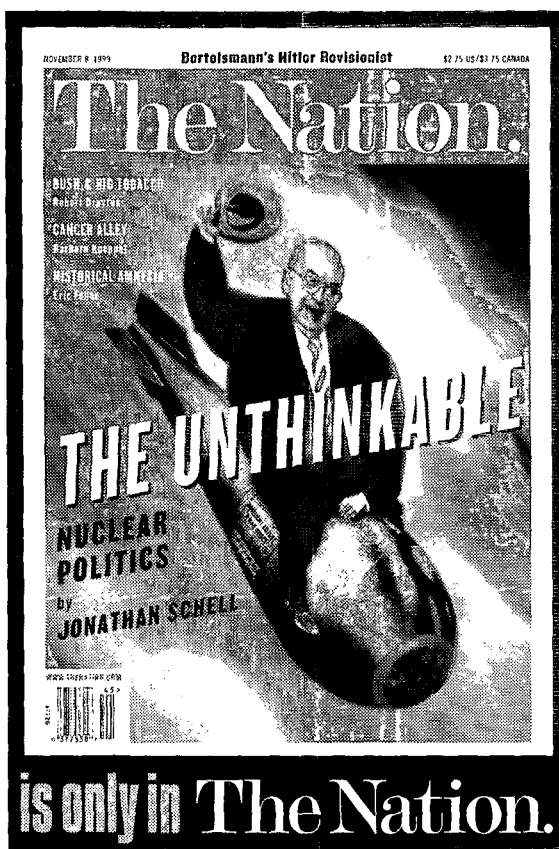
About The Wall Street Journal Contrary to its self-assessment as "the world's most important publication," Gore Vidal noted for *The Nation* "just how unknown this cheery neofascist paper is to the majority of Americans."

About Arts Funding As columnist Katha Pollitt wrote, "the right-wing attack on the National Endowment for the Arts is playing to a small, if ferocious, constituency. Contrary to stereotype, Americans like the arts, and the more access they have to them, the more they like them."

About The Battle in Seattle. "Seattle was indeed a milestone of a new kind of politics. Labor shed its nationalism for a new rhetoric of internationalism and solidarity. Progressives replaced their apologetic demeanor of the past twenty years with confidence, style and wit."

About The Battle Beyond Seattle. As William Greider put it in his debut as *The Nation's* national affairs correspondent, "Arrogance designed the WTO; arrogance will doubtless defend it. In the meantime, the WTO can serve as a splendid rallying point for popular resistance."

About The F.B.I. An intensive investigation for *The Nation* turned up everything from slovenly casework to massively skewed priorities. Example: Number of convictions for health and safety violations against employees in a single year: one. Number of telephone taps: 1.3 million.



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The New Federalist Revolution

I was wrong about Clarence Thomas. Don't misunderstand me. I still have my "I believe Anita Hill" button, but I'm beginning to think that all that talk about Long Dong Silver and *The Exorcist* was a ploy by Senators Orrin Hatch and Strom Thurmond to distract us from the real deal. While we focused on Thomas' sexual conduct, his views on the Constitution are what should have set off alarms. Almost a decade later, Thomas is all his backers ever hoped for: an aggressive, black new federalist who wants Congress to stop protecting civil rights.

Thanks to his decisive vote in a series of narrow rulings, we're starting the 21st century with our civil rights set back to before the New Deal. On May 15, the Supreme Court voided the civil provision of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which permitted victims of rape, domestic violence and other gender-motivated crimes to sue their attackers in federal court. The case centered on plaintiff Christy Brzonkala, who sued her two football-player attackers when their Virginia college failed to discipline them. The defendants challenged the constitutionality of the law.

When Thomas joined the Rehnquist majority to strike down the federal protections offered by VAWA, victims of gender-related crimes joined state workers and the elderly in having no guarantee to equal treatment backed up by federal law. (The disabled may be next, depending on how the Court rules in a current challenge to the Americans with Disabilities Act.)

The VAWA ruling (*United States v. Morrison*) was the latest victory for so-called new federalism. New federalists claim that Congress may only address national affairs specifically enumerated in the Constitution, such as interstate commerce and trade. An overreach by Congress, they insist, trespasses on "states' rights."

Since FDR, the Court had leaned the other way. To combat the Depression, the Court granted Congress the right to regulate minimum wages and working conditions. In the '60s and '70s, it accept-

ed that bias hurt interstate commerce and violated the 14th Amendment, which promises a guarantee of equal protection, and gave Congress the go-ahead to defend individuals and groups against discrimination regardless of (and often because of) resistance in states.



Since he joined the court, Thomas has regularly supported states' rights. In the VAWA case, he not only sided with Justices Rehnquist, Scalia, O'Connor and Kennedy, but wrote a brief concurring opinion wishing the court had done more to rein in Congress.

In 1995, Thomas joined the majority to throw out a federal gun law. The landmark decision in *United States v. Lopez* declared Congress was constitutionally out of line when it passed the Gun-Free Schools Act. In June 1999, the justices deprived thousands of state workers of a federal remedy for violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act (*Alden v. Maine*). This January, the Court ruled that Congress had no right to allow individuals to sue a state over age discrimination (*Kimel v. Florida Board of Regents*). In all of these cases, the verdict was 5 to 4.

Thomas has been part of a team effort to limit federal authority since he entered the Reagan Administration. First in the Justice Department as assistant secretary for civil rights, then as director of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Thomas served with people who saw it as their mission to defang agencies charged with enforcing civil rights laws. He did his part. In the '70s, the EEOC had extracted millions of dollars in compensation, training and back pay

for women and minorities from big corporations like GE, AT&T and GM. Under Thomas, the EEOC found "no cause" to prosecute in more than half of its caseload.

A man with a special mission to put a black face on the assault on civil rights protections, Thomas was fed and watered by right-wingers who advanced his career. Now that he's on the bench, his old colleagues, out of government, want to finish what they left undone. Three groups are spearheading the drive for new federalism: the Center for Individual Rights, whose lawyers argued the VAWA case; the Center for Equal Opportunity, a think tank that provides amicus briefs and political support; and the Institute for Justice, a libertarian-right legal group.

The leaders of this assault are Thomas' old cohort. Michael McDonald, co-founder and president of the Center for Individual Rights, worked in the Reagan Justice Department, as did Michael Carvin, a founding member of its board; Linda Chavez, president of the Center for Equal Opportunity, was Reagan's civil rights commissioner; Clint Bolick, head

Thanks to Clarence Thomas' vote in a series of rulings, our civil rights have been set back decades.

of litigation at the Institute for Justice, worked under Thomas at the EEOC.

These folks have enjoyed a precarious majority on the Supreme Court ever since Thomas squeaked through, and they've used his vote to lay the groundwork for a new federalist revolution. Traditional environmental, labor and civil rights groups (except for feminists) have mounted little in the way of loud, political counterattack, yet the precedents set by this court could invite a challenge to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Minimum Wage Act and the Environmental Protection Agency.

What's next? That will be up to the next president and the Senate to decide, something to bear in mind as we slouch toward November. ■

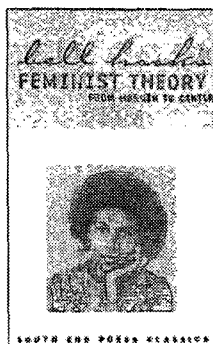
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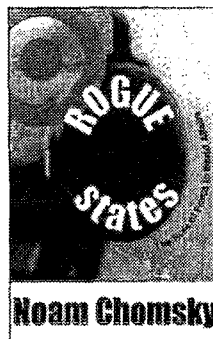
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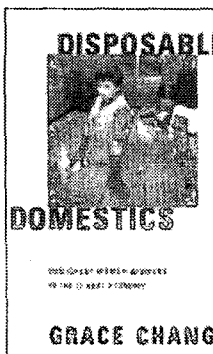
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Immigrant Women Workers in the
Global Economy

By Grace Chang

Foreword by Mimi Abramovitz

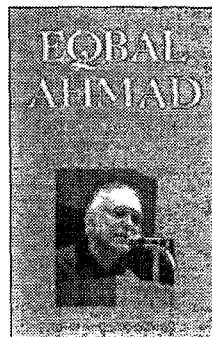
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AFRICA IN AGONY

By G. Pascal Zachary

BUJUMBURA, BURUNDI

The governor's office is reached by a dirt road that winds south from the capital through a hillside jungle stretching along the east side of Lake Tanganyika. Major Bathazar Ntamahungiro, the governor, won't travel the road at night and ambushes are common in daytime, so he is happy when his visitors arrive at his tree-shrouded headquarters after a 90-minute journey from the capital.

Six months ago, he says, the rebels wreaked havoc on the main road and often killed peasant farmers. Now his soldiers patrol the road, and the peasants in this province are safer, he says, having been removed from their homes and herded into 55 "regroupment" camps. The peasants, guarded by government troops, can leave their temporary mud homes during the day but must return in the evening. Conditions are abysmal. Hundreds of people are crammed onto a small patch of bare hillside. They lack running water, electricity, schools or health clinics. Families live in small, mud-walled huts covered by plastic tarps.

In the camp, surrounded by government soldiers and cut off from their crops and homes, it is harder for them to help the rebels, the governor says. "We are putting all the means we have into destroying the enemy," he adds. "But when you're fighting a guerrilla war, you don't win overnight. You can't predict when the fighting will end."

Ntamahungiro is talking about Burundi's seven-year civil war, but it well describes all of Africa's wars. The continent, after a period of relative optimism, this year seemed poised to overcome—or at least tame—the forces of ethnicity, greed and conflict that characterized the '90s. In an apparent watershed, the U.N. Security Council even devoted the month of February to easing African tensions, with U.S. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke making a well-publicized visit to Central Africa, where he extolled the possibilities for reconciliation, peace-building and development.

But the forces of disorder in Africa once more seem on the rise:

- In Sierra Leone, a fragile truce broke down in May, exposing anew the weakness of U.N. peacekeeping operations and prompting Britain to unilaterally dispatch soldiers to the country. Even following the capture of rebel leader Foday Sankoh, the terms of a future settlement are unclear.
- Ethiopian forces seized the southwest part of Eritrea, which seceded from Ethiopia in the early '90s, resuming a two-year-old war and triggering chaos as refugees fled. The resumption of war follows the outbreak of famine in Ethiopia, raising dif-

ficult questions for international donors about how to balance the need for aid with the importance of not rewarding a government that chose to invest in military might over basic land conservation and farming.

- The nominal chief of the Congo, Laurent Kabila, remains unable to control the vast central African nation, which is home to numerous small wars, some of which go largely unreported by the international press. A half dozen nations, from as far away as Zimbabwe, have troops involved in this fight.
- In Zimbabwe, President Robert Mugabe is terrorizing his political opponents and trying to force white farmers, who own the bulk of the country's best land, to surrender it to blacks. Land tensions also are growing in Kenya and South Africa, where white colonials still own much farmland.
- Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, is struggling with a transition to civilian rule that has been marked most dramatically by violence between Muslims and Christians. Though tensions seem to be easing, hundreds have been killed.
- Neighbors Rwanda and Uganda, allies in the drive to overthrow Kabila's predecessor Mobutu Sese Seko in the Congo (then Zaire), are on the brink of war after clashes between their troops.

The renewed breakdown of order in Africa highlights twin dilemmas of the sub-Saharan region. First, the forces of ethnicity and uneven development continue to undermine effective local and national government in Africa. Second, international organizations, notably the United Nations, still lack the power and resolve to ensure that negotiated settlements of conflicts become a prelude to social stability and the growth of civil society.

The morass of Sierra Leone illustrates both these dilemmas. A former British colony where rival groups fight for control over diamonds, the country has lacked a functioning government for years. It has few civic leaders untainted by allegations of murder and corruption, virtually no legal businesses, and its health and education systems are among the world's worst. "You can't realistically expect Sierra Leonian politicians, or warlords, to produce long-term peace and security," says Steven Ellis, a professor of African studies at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands. "On their own, they can't break this cycle."

Yet other countries and international agencies seem unwilling to intervene directly in Sierra Leone to administer the country, much less impose order. For the United States, the experience of Somalia looms large in its restrained response. Rent apart by warlords, Somalia proved treacherous for American soldiers stationed there. One dead marine was infamously dragged through the streets of Mogadishu. With its proliferation of armed gangs, Sierra Leone seems to present a similar situation. The U.N. peacekeepers, while beefing up their numbers, still refuse to take offensive action. The British also have been careful to avoid attacks on the rebels, preferring to assist the government with logistics. These troops could leave the country soon, though Britain hasn't imposed a deadline for withdrawal.

Diplomatic efforts, however, still draw a crowd. Last summer, the United States and the United Nations did broker a truce between the government and rebels, essentially creating a new government comprised of leaders from both sides. Amnesty was granted to combatants—including those who hacked off the limbs of hundreds of men, women and children—out of a belief that immunity from prosecution was the only way to persuade rebels to stop fighting, surrender their arms and join in a common program of national recovery. The idea was to give Sierra Leone a fresh start, but neither the United States nor the United Nations put much effort into creating incentives for the warring factions to set aside their arms.

The pact fell apart in May when the time came for the rebels to give up control of the country's diamond mines, which provide cash for arms and soldiers. Foday Sankoh, the rebel leader, seized U.N. peacekeepers, forcing a crisis. For a few days it looked as if his forces might overrun the capital, Freetown, and rout the U.N. troops, but the arrival of British soldiers and U.N. reinforcements—as well as Sankoh's capture—have strengthened the government's hand.

Still, international agencies remain confused about how to help Sierra Leone. The United Nations and the United States are unwilling to take on the task of administering Sierra Leone indefinitely, much the way that they are running East Timor and Kosovo now. But it isn't even clear whether such trusteeships work, or whether any of Sierra Leone's elite—living at home or abroad—would support such a drastic measure. There is suspicion among many that outside powers themselves want a slice of the country's diamond wealth. While it is fashionable to talk of African

solutions for African problems, it isn't clear what this means in a depleted country like Sierra Leone.

The twin dilemmas of Sierra Leone—ineffective government and lack of international resolve—bedevil much of sub-Saharan Africa, making a continuation of violence and disorder seem almost inevitable. But this is too pat of a forecast. As the experience of Burundi suggests, these dilemmas may not be unsolvable.

A small, landlocked nation of 6 million, Burundi is a former Belgian colony with the second-highest population density in Africa and among the lowest standards of living. A minority Tutsi group dominates the majority Hutu



Mandela excoriated the leaders of both groups for failing to redress the imbalance of power between Hutus and Tutsis.

group politically, economically and educationally. In 1993, a democratically elected Hutu president was killed in a revolt by the Tutsi-controlled army. The assassination unleashed a new cycle of ethnic violence (earlier ones occurred in 1965 and 1972) that so far has taken the lives of an estimated 200,000 people and displaced more than 1.2 million people, many to regroupment camps.

The civil war flares up from time to time, though Burundi counts as a relative success because it has avoided the all-out violence that consumed neighboring Rwanda, where many of the same divisive forces are at play. Yet in some ways, Burundi's troubles are deeper than those facing Rwanda, which has received relatively large amounts of foreign aid in reaction to the genocide there, and where the minority Tutsi

government isn't being asked to share power in meaningful ways with the Hutu majority. In Burundi, ruling Tutsis face increasing pressure to share power with Hutus, who are an overwhelming majority in the country but denied positions in the courts, civil service, universities, the military and other important fields. There are, for instance, only two Hutu lawyers in all of Burundi.

Unable to gain the edge militarily, Hutus are now hoping that international parties will redress the imbalance of power in the country before a full-scale war breaks out—a war that may drag in neighboring Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda and even the Congo. Many of the Hutu rebels, for instance, have bases in Tanzania and the Congo, so the conflict is already wider than most realize.

Burundi's potential as a regional flashpoint perhaps explains why it ranks so high on the agenda of African peace-builders. None other than Nelson Mandela has agreed to

personally settle the conflict. Wading into the situation early this year, Mandela excoriated the leaders of both groups for failing to curb their own internal disputes and redress the imbalance of power between Hutus and Tutsis. In late May, Mandela announced that significant progress had been made, and that government and rebel leaders would meet in July.

Despite Mandela's optimism, Burundi's economy is near collapse. Foreign aid has fallen sharply because of international disapproval of the Tutsi-dominated government of Pierre Buyoya. In 1993, the country received more than \$200 million in official aid, while the amount totaled less than \$20 million in 1998. Meanwhile, the very civil society upon which Mandela hopes to build—bypassing corrupt elites—is suffering a free fall. The number of HIV cases is rising fast. Primary school enrollment has plummeted in recent years, from 70 percent to 44 percent, according to a World Bank

Radio Free Burundi

For the dozen journalists at Studio Ijambo, an independent producer of radio news and analysis, the morning meeting is a chance to swap sources—and tips on staying alive. Which roads are suddenly dangerous? Which military officers can be trusted and which can't? What are the rebels doing?

In recent weeks, the countryside has grown "hot" again, with travel riskier and attacks more frequent. A senior editor, chairing the meeting, tells the group that the United Nations is offering bulletproof vests, free of charge.

"What makes them think they'll shoot me in my chest? Why not my head?" cracks one of the female reporters. "Maybe the U.N. should give me a helmet."

"Or why not one of their armored cars?" asks another reporter.

The room erupts in laughter, but the editor isn't amused. His staff works in a country where civil war is a way of life. Dangers can be minimized, and maybe this is one way to do so, he wonders aloud.

These are among Burundi's most thoughtful journalists, so the question is taken seriously. Every day they courageously report on a civil war without clear battle lines—and the ethnic conflicts between politically dominant Tutsis and majority Hutus that fuel that war.

In Burundi, radio is the most powerful medium. Not only does it reach the

biggest audiences—dwarfing newspapers and TV—but it has been used as a tool to promote ethnic hatred in neighboring Rwanda, where radio journalists actually helped direct the slaughter of Tutsis by Hutus six years ago.

For this reason, five-year-old Studio Ijambo promotes understanding between the two groups, often sending out both a Hutu and Tutsi reporter to ensure that many perspectives on an issue get aired. Staffed by a roughly equal number of Hutus and Tutsis, the studio is a collaboration between locals and Search for Common Ground, a Washington nonprofit that supports media initiatives around the world. Studio Ijambo's reports are respected enough that Burundi's national radio station airs them daily, and several Ijambo reporters cover the country for Reuters and other foreign print media.

Agnes Nindorera, who writes for Agence-France Press, has taken her share of risks in two decades of reporting. Two years ago, a provincial governor arrested her for seven hours. Her offense? She insisted on entering his province.

Last September, she caused a furor with an article criticizing the military's treatment of Hutus in "regroupment" camps. Herself a Tutsi, she was hauled into military headquarters and assailed for "betraying" her own group. In local vernacular, this was tantamount to a

death threat. Rather than hide, which she had done on other occasions, she sued a senior military officer in court, exposing herself even further.

The following month, Burundi's then minister of defense gave a speech where he complained about Nindorera's articles and said that if any journalists visited a regroupment camp they should be treated as "the enemy." This time, she left the country for several weeks until the furor faded. Two years earlier, she had done the same after a senior military officer told her to go into hiding or risk being murdered.

So compelling are Nindorera's articles—and so complicated are the tensions within the Tutsi and Hutu elite—that "powerful people want to protect her and privately support her work," says Alexis Sinduhije, a prominent Burundi journalist.

Were it not for the help of closet reformers, says Nindorera, 38, "I would not still be alive."

Worse than her fears is the difficulty of coping with her grief. Many of her relatives were killed or fled their homes in attacks by Hutus. In her village, 64 relatives died, and the house where she was born and lived until the age of 15 was destroyed.

Viewing the ruins of this house, which she did four years ago, left her bereft. "Everything was looted," she recalls. "I didn't cry, but inside me was pain. Pain deeper than crying."

G.P.Z.

study, which also cites a tripling of the percentage of children under the age of 5 who suffer malnutrition.

Influential Tutsis concede that perhaps their only hope of reversing the steady decline of Burundi is to share more power with the Hutus, but they remain worried about how to do so. "The real problem is that our 'cake' is too small and too many people want a piece of it," says Eugene Nindorera, Burundi's minister for human rights. He admits that the Hutu majority "feels excluded" and has endured decades of second-class citizenship, but worries that Tutsi rights will be trampled unless the country can somehow "move slowly" beyond group discrimination.

This argument for Tutsi dominance carries echoes of apartheid-style thinking. "If you give complete power to a majority, you get genocide," says Prime Nyamoya, a leading economist and a Tutsi. "The basic problem in Burundi remains how to protect the minority politically, culturally and economically. Because if the Hutus take over, we're crushed. That was the lesson of Rwanda."

Mandela embodies this lesson. In South Africa, whites long argued that majority-rule was inappropriate for their country. But Mandela dispatched this concern morally and practically when he took power as leader of the African National Congress.

The ANC's decision to give amnesty to those who engaged in violent acts, providing they spoke candidly before the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, laid the foundation for a culture of forgiveness to take root in the country.

Mandela's approach involved trade-offs, of course—the biggest being that blacks had to accept they couldn't even the score with whites immediately. Impatience with the legacy of apartheid is growing, and under new President Thabo Mbeki, South African blacks are pushing their own interests more aggressively. Privileged whites, even supporters of broad ANC aims, are on the defensive and some are leaving the country. But despite the setbacks, the multi-ethnic character of South Africa remains, as does the commitment to reconciliation.

Can the South African model work in Burundi? Perhaps. In any case, this is what Mandela knows best. Whether he can convince Burundi's uncivil elites—Tutsi and Hutu alike—to follow his path presents another test for the battered idea that Africans can take the first, decisive steps toward solving their own problems. ■

G. Pascal Zachary is author of *The Global Me: New Cosmopolitans and the Competitive Edge* (Public Affairs).

"If you give complete power to a majority, you get genocide. That was the lesson of Rwanda."

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Mission: Implausible

By Seth Ackerman

May 7 marked the anniversary of one of the most fateful episodes of 1999: the U.S. bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade during NATO's war on Yugoslavia. NATO and the United States apologized for the bombing and called it an accident; China rejected the apology and Washington's explanation—that a “faulty map” led to the “mistaken” bombing.

Until recently, remarkably little serious investigation of the bombing had been undertaken by the American press. This is not the case in Europe. Late last year, the London *Observer* and Denmark's prestigious *Politiken* newspaper jointly published an explosive exposé: Sourced to European and NATO officials, the papers charged that the bombing had been a deliberate American act of retaliation against China for its rebroadcasting of Yugoslav military transmissions from within the intelligence wing of its Belgrade embassy (see “A Tragic Mistake?” December 12, 1999).

Now new information has emerged in the American press raising more disturbing questions about how—and why—the attack was carried out. Following the *Observer-Politiken* report, the media watch group FAIR called on U.S. newspapers, including the *New York Times*, to investigate the bombing. At first, *Times* foreign editor Andrew Rosenthal simply said that his reporters had been unable to confirm the *Observer's* allegations. But hundreds of readers wrote to the *Times* calling for an inquiry, and on April 17 the paper finally printed a lengthy investigative story that revealed telling details about the attack.

The *Times* story can be read on two levels. Superficially, the piece gives the impression that the *Observer's* charges have proven groundless: “The investigation produced no evidence that the bombing of the embassy had been a deliberate act,” the *Times* reported. But read more closely, Pentagon reporter Steven Lee Myers' piece conveys a nagging sense of doubt about the CIA and Pentagon's protestations of innocence. Myers characterizes the official account of the targeting process as a “bizarre chain” of missteps. And he pointedly ends his article on a skeptical note, citing Rep. Porter Goss (R-Fla.), who was briefed on the bombing by CIA and Pentagon officials: “In the end, he said he was confident in their assurances it had not been a deliberate strike. He paused, then added, ‘unless some people are lying to me.’”

Indeed, the article's chronology describing how the CIA managed to “accidentally” target the embassy is puzzling. The CIA analyst who “mistakenly” pinpointed the embassy's location inexplicably failed to send the bombing proposal to the agency's targeting specialists for review. Instead, he took the initiative of downloading and filling out a Pentagon targeting

form himself. The form was then sent by him to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the *Times* wrote, “appearing to be a more advanced proposal than it was.” The Joint Chiefs failed to carry out a thorough review. (“The reasons are not clear,” according to the paper.) The CIA claims the analyst—a retired Army officer working on contract for the agency—incorrectly guessed the location of his intended target based on the street addresses of a few nearby landmarks. “To target based on that is incomprehensible,” one official told the *Times*.

Meanwhile, another CIA analyst repeatedly tried to prevent the bombing from taking place after speaking to “a source” who confirmed that the ostensible target—a Yugoslav arms

What the media didn't tell you about the Chinese Embassy bombing

agency headquarters—was in fact located 1,000 yards south of the building that had been specified in the bombing proposal. The skeptical analyst then warned military officers in Europe that the wrong building was being targeted, but the attack went ahead anyway. The *Times's* sources claim the analyst “did not make his questions ... sound grave enough to remove the target from the list.” Although the agency claims that the arms agency was the intended target, in the end that building was never bombed.

As a case of mistaken targeting, this extraordinary sequence of events is nearly impossible to believe. But it does square—disturbingly well—with an entirely different scenario: that the attack was an intentional strike against the embassy, orchestrated by anti-China forces within U.S. military and intelligence services.

Washington is split on China into two main camps. On one side is the administration and its business allies, whose policy of “engagement”—including China's accession to the WTO—aims to draw China gradually into the American-dominated global order. Arrayed against these figures is a growing chorus of critics on the right who denounce engagement and call for a policy of containment and cold war. (They have an uneasy alliance with labor and the left, who decry China's abuse of labor and human rights.)

For hardliners in the United States, last year's war in the Balkans offered plenty of cause for outrage against China. An implacable opponent of the NATO air strikes from the start, China cemented increasingly close ties with Yugoslavia as the

war progressed. The *Observer* reported that China used its embassy in Belgrade to help the Yugoslav army rebroadcast its military radio signals to troops in Kosovo. China specialist Robert Manning of the Council on Foreign Relations told the *Los Angeles Times* that the Belgrade embassy was "the center of the Chinese spy operation in Europe."

Perhaps even more galling was what China may have gained from its relationship with Serbia. Three days into the air strikes, an American F-117 stealth fighter—the most

covert operations to stem the spread of weapons technology to "unfriendly" governments.

That brings us back to the *New York Times*. Reading the *Times*' long, densely written article, it's easy to miss the most important fact uncovered by the paper's investigation—a detail mentioned almost in passing, in a sentence halfway into the 4,000-word report. Myers reveals that the agency's regular targeting office—the Central Targeting Support Staff—was not consulted about the target. Instead, the "faulty" target information came, unsolicited, from none other than the Counter-Proliferation Division—a unit with "no specific expertise in targeting or in the Balkans."

Myers failed to note two key points about the Counter-Proliferation Division. First, it is a covert operations unit, located within the CIA's Directorate of Operations rather than the Directorate of Intelligence. It makes little sense for such a unit to develop targets at all. Routine pencil-and-paper intelligence analysis—such as the bombing target information that would normally have been produced by the Central Targeting Support Staff—is conducted under the auspices of the Directorate of Intelligence.

The Directorate of Operations, on the other hand, carries out clandestine missions and directs spies in the field.

The second key point about the Counter-Proliferation Division is that many of its officers have been steadfastly opposed to the Clinton administration's policies toward China. Although not widely reported, the battle in Washington over China policy has not been confined to the think tanks and op-ed pages—it also has been the focus of a bitter struggle within the American defense establishment. Much of that struggle has been fought over the issue of China's development and exporting of advanced weapons technologies. And behind that issue lies a broader battle over China's—and America's—role in the world.

Consider the case of Gordon Oehler. As head of the CIA's Non-Proliferation Center, Oehler was in charge of analyzing classified intelligence information on the spread of weapons technology. An analytical office within the Directorate of Intelligence, the center interprets data gathered largely by the spies in the Counter-Proliferation Division. In 1997, Oehler battled with the Clinton administration over Chinese missile sales to Pakistan. Analyses by his staff showed that China had sold short-range M-11 missiles to Pakistan. But administration officials suppressed the CIA's findings because a Chinese missile sale would have legally required the administration to impose sanctions on China—a step that would have undermined the policy of engagement. When Oehler started giving closed-door briefings to Congress on the missiles, CIA Director George Tenet moved to slash Oehler's staff.



advanced combat aircraft in the U.S. arsenal—was shot down over Serb territory. Its pilot was rescued, but the aircraft's wreckage was left behind. Air Force Chief of Staff Michael Ryan confirmed that Yugoslavia had sold the wreckage to an unnamed country. Many believe that country is China.

The strategic implications of such an F-117 transfer are considerable. The *Times* of London reported last November that China is close to a breakthrough in its efforts to develop a stealth-proof radar system. "Fears that enemies might crack the radar-enhancing technology, over which America enjoys a monopoly ... mounted after [the] F-117 stealth fighter was shot down over Serbia," the paper reported.

According to *Newsweek*: "The Chinese [anti-stealth radar] advance has so alarmed the defense community that top military and industry experts have been called to a secret meeting in December to discuss the strategic implications. Everyone is wondering about the cost of defending Taiwan if U.S. air power is suddenly vulnerable, says one intelligence source."

The task of trying to block a transfer of the F-117 wreckage from Serbia to China would have been the responsibility of the clandestine officers working in the CIA's Counter-Proliferation Division, which carries out

ILLUSTRATION: TERRY LABAN

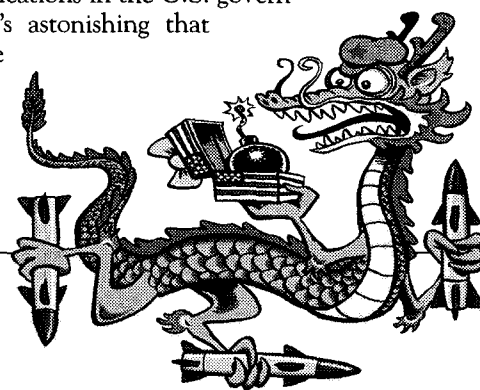
Instead, Oehler resigned and went public with the fight, giving open testimony to Congress disclosing the Chinese missile sales and the administration's cover-up. He quoted from a 1997 CIA report prepared by him and his staff, which concluded that China is "the most significant supplier of weapons of mass destruction-related goods and technology to foreign countries" in the world. Ending on a decidedly hawkish note, Oehler told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee: "In my opinion, based on [China's] record, we need to base any future agreements with China on something more than the word of its leaders."

Oehler's case quickly became a *cause célèbre* on the anti-China right. But Oehler's testimony also highlighted the intensity of the fight over China going on within the intelligence bureaucracy. He noted that he was not alone within the agency: "Other intelligence analysts were very discouraged to see their work was regularly dismissed," Oehler told the Senate.

For years, disgruntled right-wing military and intelligence officials hostile to the administration's policies have tried to gain the upper hand in the China debate. One of their methods has been aggressive leaking of classified intelligence about China and North Korea to the media. (Tensions on the

Korean peninsula are closely related to the China issue, because American troops stationed there are considered an important counterweight to Chinese influence in the region. Whenever tensions with North Korea are reduced, questions arise about the need for a continued U.S. military presence in the South.)

Their main journalistic conduit has been Bill Gertz, national security correspondent for the right-wing *Washington Times*. *Betrayal*, a book published by Gertz last year, included a 60-page appendix of highly classified government documents on Clinton's policies toward China, North Korea and Russia that were leaked by Gertz's sources. The book "touched off widespread concern in the intelligence community," according to an Associated Press report, because of the extremely sensitive nature of the documents. "These documents carry some of the highest classifications in the U.S. government, and it's astonishing that they would be published in



Trading Places

By David Moberg

The impending approval of a permanent normal trade relationship—PNTR—with China was a setback for the cause of regulating the global economy to promote human and workers rights, environmental protection and democracy. But the loss is not a permanent defeat—and even opens some opportunities.

PNTR was never an ideal issue for such a high-profile fight. Even if Congress had kept annual trade reviews, China almost certainly would have entered the World Trade Organization anyway, and multinational corporations from the United States and elsewhere would have continued to step up their investments in China to take advantage of its huge, cheap labor force. Rejecting PNTR would have been symbolically important as a statement that trade and human rights should be linked, and it would have allowed greater leverage over China, but politicians were reluctant to effectively use the influence they had.

What does this mean for President Clinton's legacy? Time and again, except when it really counted, Clinton argued for the necessity of labor, environmental and consumer protections in the rules of the new global economy. But whenever it mattered, he turned with an outstretched hand toward the corporate money that has so corrupted American politics.

While there's good reason to be cynical about the Democrats, it would be a mistake to abandon the battle for the party's direction to corporate apologists like the Democratic Leadership Council. As a price for their support, unions and others working within the Democratic Party should insist that Democrats make strong commitments to

workers rights and environmental safeguards in all international agreements and economic institutions, such as the WTO, IMF and World Bank.

While China's government richly deserved—and should continue to get—criticism for its record on human and workers rights, the battle over PNTR shifted the focus of the debate away from the two central issues of the "Seattle coalition": drawing up new rules for the global economy that subordinate trade to human development and democracy, and making corporations more accountable to workers and citizens, wherever they operate.

The proponents of PNTR claimed that more trade and investment would promote democratic values in China. They should be held to that promise. Whether they're shutting down plants in the United States or making new investments in China, Mexico or other countries, corporations—and not simply the high-profile consumer goods manufacturers—should be the targets of popular campaigns questioning their claims: How does throwing American workers out of their jobs advance human rights? Will they agree to independent unions in their Chinese factories (or their American ones, for that matter)? Will they pay a living wage, whatever the country? Will they protect the safety of workers and the surrounding environment?

The more the movement can focus on the failures and abuses of multinational corporations, the stronger the case will be for new rules for the global economy. China's entry into the WTO in the near future makes that fight even more critical. ■

this way," Steve Aftergood of the Federation of American Scientists told The AP. The article said the FBI has been investigating for years to identify the sources of Gertz's leaks.

Who are Gertz's sources? In the book, he writes that they are "dissidents and patriots" within the national security bureaucracy. President Clinton's "betrayal of American national security so angered some intelligence, defense, and foreign policy officials," Gertz writes, "that they responded in the only way they knew how: by disclosing some of the of the nation's most secret intelligence."

One such episode occurred in August 1998. A front-page article in the *New York Times* sourced to intelligence officials reported that classified satellite photos showed that North Korea, in violation of an agreement with the United States, was reviving its nuclear weapons program inside a vast underground complex. South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung had recently urged the United States to drop its 45-year-old sanctions against the North. "But the new finding makes it far less likely that the United States will ease up," said the *Times*.

Reacting to the leak, Madeleine Albright called North Korea a "huge threat" and demanded that they allow the site to be monitored. Several months later, inspectors visited the facility and U.S. officials disclosed that it was simply a huge, empty tunnel.

According to Kenneth Quinones, the State Department director for North Korean affairs in the first Clinton administration, the leak was the work of a group of hardliners in the intelligence agencies. These officials remain "convinced that North Korea's primary goal remains the domination of the entire Korean peninsula." "Someone in this group," Quinones wrote in a paper for the Nautilus Institute, "apparently decided ... to scare the American and Korean public into changing policy toward North Korea, by leaking secret 'imagery intelligence' to the American press."

How high-ranking are these hardliners? Selig Harrison, a leading North Korea expert who covered the region for the *Washington Post*, says Defense Intelligence Agency chief Lt. Gen. Patrick Hughes is the source of many of these leaks. Harrison quotes a grateful congressional Republican foreign-policy staffer praising Hughes—whose anti-China views are well-known—for providing intelligence that contradicts "the highly politicized, laundered stuff" he attributes to CIA Director George Tenet.

Such machinations are not limited to press leaks. A mysterious incident occurred in September 1997, when North Korea, South Korea, China and the United States were scheduled to hold historic four-party peace negotiations aimed at replacing the 1953 Korean armistice with a formal peace treaty. The United States also was hoping to win North Korea's signature on an international arms control agreement regulating missile sales abroad. If successful, the United States would have relaxed sanctions against the North, considerably easing tensions in Asia.

But one day before the talks were to resume, the North Korean ambassador to Egypt—a major player in North Korea's

missile sales to the Middle East—suddenly defected to the United States. It soon emerged that the ambassador had been spirited out of the country by agents working for the CIA. *Newsweek* cited U.S. intelligence officials who revealed that the ambassador had been working with the agency for years: The "defector" was a spy. And someone in the agency had deliberately called him in from the cold just before a round of talks with the North was set to begin. Predictably, North Korea was furious, canceling its participation in either set of talks.


In the Washington debate over China's role in the post-Cold War world, both the Clinton administration and its right-wing opponents share the same basic goal, lucidly expressed in a classified Pentagon planning document written shortly after the Soviet Union's collapse and leaked to the *New York Times* in 1992. The United States "must maintain the mechanisms for deterring potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global role," the document said.

Neither side questions that goal. The argument is about how it should be accomplished. For the Clintonites, China is best contained by entangling it in a global economic system run by the United States. For the right, China must be contained militarily. There is another dimension to the question: The United States has 40,000 troops on military bases in Japan and another 35,000

stationed in Korea; the Seventh Fleet patrols the waters of the Pacific, where China and Taiwan face off. A new cold war with China (as well as North Korea) would eliminate the pressure for American forces to withdraw from Asia, where their usefulness is now unclear.

After retiring from the Defense Intelligence Agency last September, Patrick Hughes gave a closed-door talk at the Potomac Institute, a private defense think tank where Gordon Oehler now works. An account of Hughes' presentation appeared in the *Aerospace Daily*. "We in the United States don't have a peer competitor right now," Hughes said. "But sometime in the future we may. And withdrawing, contracting, and restricting is not the right answer—because we will leave a vacuum out there which others will fill."

The Chinese Embassy bombing's lasting effects will make that prospect far less likely. In the year since the attack, Chinese attitudes toward the United States have changed irrevocably. "Gone are the ... rosy prospects for a partnership with Washington," wrote The AP on the anniversary of the bombing. "Supporters of closer U.S. ties are on the defensive, and groups long wary of American intentions have grown more leery and vocal."

Yet the bombing still remains a mystery. Could the CIA's far-fetched alibi be true? Were the officials responsible for the attack following their own agenda on China? *Politiken* and the *Observer* continue to pursue the story. But it is time for skeptical journalists in the United States to help investigate the bombing and discover what really happened. 

Seth Ackerman is a media analyst for FAIR.

A new cold war with China would eliminate the need for American forces to withdraw from Asia.

Germany's New Identity

For immigrants, there is power in a union

By David Bacon

FRANKFURT, GERMANY

Twenty-six years ago, as a young theology student, Manuel Campos fled Portugal one step ahead of the secret police. Just before the fascist dictator Marcelo Caetano fell in 1974, Campos discovered his name on a list of people about to be arrested. A priest got him out of the country, and Campos suddenly found himself in Germany, a young man with no prospects, few skills and a head full of radical ideas.

He arrived at the end of a long wave of immigration, promoted by big companies that advertised for contract workers throughout southern Europe. Asylum seekers like Campos were part of the mix, welcomed at a time when Germany's labor supply was low, and the need for educated workers was high. He wound up in an auto plant. "I saw the assembly lines filled with immigrants like myself," he remembers. "When I came here there was nothing for us. We had either fled our countries, like me, or we were looking for a way to send enough money home so that our families would survive. Lots of us were here for both reasons."

Campos didn't forget the experience. Today he heads a unique department in the big German industrial union, IG Metall, where he organizes immigrant workers. He moves with frenetic energy—his fingers race through piles of paper as he talks a mile a minute, pulling out charts and numbers to back up his point: Immigrants have had a big impact on the German workplace.

About 7 million of Germany's 80 million people are immigrants, who make up about 2 million of its 34 million workers. IG Metall is the largest single union in the world, with 2.8 million members, but its membership has been declining as industry leaves high-wage Germany. Still, the number of immigrant members has remained relatively constant—about 275,000. The numbers indicate the important role union membership plays in immigrant life here.

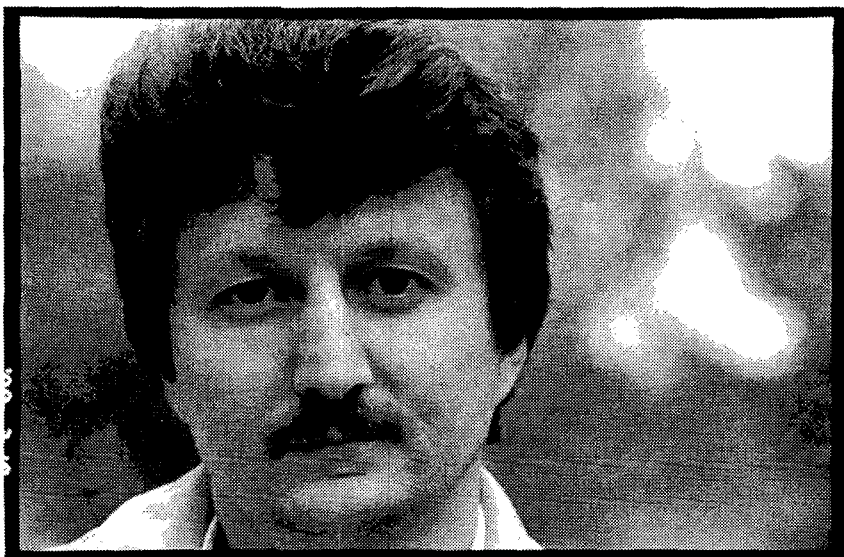
Campos tends to make speeches when he describes the work of his department, but he has some justification for crowing. With his help, IG Metall has fought with Germany's largest corporations to develop unique agreements combining affirmative action with protection against discrimination and harassment.

In Germany, like the United States, federal law forbids discrimination. But Campos says the law doesn't really protect immigrant workers, who are still referred to officially as foreigners. "It's almost impossible for immigrants to file complaints and get them enforced," Campos charges. "The court system is very conservative, and many judges are racists. ... As a result, it's much better for workers when we negotiate these agreements, which are then enforced by the works council in the workplace."

German unions don't have locals that correspond to individual workplaces. Instead, elected works councils, which can

include union members and non-members alike, negotiate over most conditions in each factory and enforce these agreements. Only wages and the hours of work (which in the West includes a 35-hour work week) are negotiated nationally, between unions (like IG Metall) and industrial employer associations. But IG Metall has an organization in each city and region. In most of them, workers have elected commissions that promote the welfare of immigrant workers. There are more than 1,000 such elected commission members throughout Germany.

IG Metall has pressured four major German corporations, including Volkswagen, to adopt standalone agreements out-



DAVID BACON

"I'm a German citizen now, and they still see me as a foreigner," says Turkish immigrant Mahmut Aktas, a chief steward at DaimlerChrysler. "They don't like it if I have a more-skilled and better-paid job than many native Germans have."

lawing discrimination or harassment based on immigrant status, along with other forms of racial and sexual mistreatment. The anti-discrimination agreements bar "mobbing"—racist harassment designed to make people quit. The agreements also require the company to provide training for unskilled workers at the bottom of the work force, and then to hire them into new positions. Tests for the new jobs, which discriminated against immigrants, have been changed. "Hundreds of thousands of immigrant workers are trapped at the bottom, in jobs which are likely to disappear," Campos says. "So they need training desperately."

The first wave of "foreign workers," who arrived in the early '60s, had it the hardest. They were called guest-workers and worked under contract. Mahmut Aktas' father came from Turkey in 1963. "He was all alone," Aktas says. "The people didn't accept him. He didn't have his family with him, and he didn't speak the language well."

Seventeen years after his father took that first labor contract, Aktas finally arrived himself, as a teen-ager. Aktas, who now works at the huge DaimlerChrysler plant here, says discrimination is common. "I started out as a skilled worker, but to my foreman, I was just a foreigner," Aktas says. "Officially, the company says discrimination doesn't exist, that we can go into any job in the factory. But if you want to get into a really skilled position, they discourage you. I'm a German citizen now, and they still see me as a foreigner. They don't like it if I have a more-skilled and better-paid job than many native Germans have."

Aktas says IG Metall makes a real effort to stop discrimination, noting that several officers of the union now are foreign workers themselves. "If a worker is prevented from getting a better job," he says. "He or she can talk to a steward, and the odds are good that the steward will be Turkish or Kurdish."

Aktas is one of them—a chief steward at DaimlerChrysler. Yet of the 36,000 workers in his plant, only 2,500 are Turkish or Kurdish, and he describes his experience as very contradictory. On the one hand, discrimination is something he confronts every day. "For example, if I or one of my Turkish co-workers want to become a spokesperson for our group in the factory," he says, "many of our German co-workers just would not vote for us."

Yet he has been elected steward three times, and believes he fights for the interests of all his fellow workers, of whatever nationality, sometimes in the face of considerable company hostility. "I've taken on their cause," he says. "My foremen and supervisors don't like this one bit, and they make it clear. They don't like the union, and they particularly don't like the fact that I'm a Turkish shop steward."

In fact, immigrants make up a much larger percentage of the union's stewards than their percentage in the general membership. "We have the worst jobs and the lowest pay. The jobs that are disappearing the fastest belong to us. But we remain union members in much greater numbers than others because we look at the union as our political homeland."

This political support stretches beyond the workplace. In the past decade, since the reunification of Germany, unemployment has soared, particularly in the former East Germany. There, groups of young neo-Nazis say immigrants have taken their jobs, and have even burned the hostels where many immigrants live. "The danger to immigrants in Germany is constant—you feel it in the streets every day," Aktas says. "You have to watch your back at every moment. I can't say the union is 100 percent behind Turkish workers, but it's a lot better than anywhere else in German society."

Every year the union mounts a campaign to coincide with the U.N. International Day of Action Against Racism. It organizes demonstrations in coalition with the German Intercultural Council and the Committee of Turks in Germany. Campos was one of many IG Metall members who went to Berlin to demonstrate against a recent neo-Nazi march. "I don't think Germany is about to become fascist again," he says. "But these groups, although they're small, are very aggressive and protected by the police. If there's no visible opposition, it's a signal that hating immigrants is acceptable."

Not all German labor is equally committed to defending immigrants. Other German unions still see immigrants as a threat. To more conservative unions, like those in construction, immigrants are viewed as low-wage competition at a time

of high unemployment. Some say immigrants are deliberately hired by employers to drive down wages.

They point to Berlin, where the federal government is building a new city center. German construction unions have been locked out of what has become the country's largest construction project. Instead, a network of subcontractors has hired an immigrant work force primarily from Eastern Europe, where unemployment is higher and wages much lower. These workers are almost all undocumented. "On our side, a worker can earn as much in an hour as the same person can earn in a day over there," says IG Metall cultural affairs director Kurt Schmitz.

A wage wall, like the iron fence between Tijuana and San Diego, has replaced the old brick wall that used to divide the East from the West in Berlin. German sociologist Boy Leutje, who has made comparative studies of labor in the United States and Germany, says that unions in both countries confront the same choice: "Are they going to fight a losing battle to keep immigrants out of their trade and their country, or are they going to see them as potential union members and try to organize them?"

With unions like IG Metall in the lead, Germany is only now beginning to see its immigrant population as permanent residents, rather than foreign workers who will someday go home. But the concept of immigration, of Germany as a country of immigrants, doesn't exist yet, Campos says. Until the law was finally changed this year, the child of an immigrant, born in Germany, was still ineligible for citizenship. "Instead of an immigration law, we have a law which calls us foreigners. We need the law to see us in a new way, to set out the conditions under which we can immigrate, and to spell out the rights the government guarantees us."

"My children were born here," Aktas adds. "For us, our future is here in Germany." ■

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Psychlo Babble

By Scott McLemee

Long before *Battlefield Earth* went into production, John Travolta had a profound appreciation for the work of L. Ron Hubbard—particularly *Dianetics* (1950), which contains blueprints for related forms of “spiritual technology” engineered by the Church of Scientology. The role of Scientology in

Battlefield Earth
Directed by Roger Christian

Hollywood is often mentioned, though little understood. The larger public can scarcely imagine the benefits an actor will receive from years of studying Hubbard's work—including (but by no means limited to) absolute control over Matter-Energy-Space-Time. Most of us obey the laws of “the MEST universe” out of blind necessity, but Travolta is affected by gravity only because he wants to be.

Which must mean that the actor possesses some pretty amazing powers, even for a celebrity; so it's disappointing that *Entertainment Tonight* has never asked for a demonstration. (Their reticence is certainly prudent though: In Scientology, litigation is a sacrament.)

Before its premiere, interviews publicizing *Battlefield Earth* became fairly monotonous in stressing that Hubbard's extremely large novel had nothing to do with his philosophical innovations. The fact that the movie was released on the 50th anniversary of the original publication of *Dianetics* was an interesting coincidence. In any case, it was not what most people noticed. Warner Brothers had reasonable grounds to hope that a \$75 million sci-fi movie, starring one of the most popular actors on the planet, would be a big draw. But the real spectacle was offscreen. Reviewers handled *Battlefield Earth* with the uncontrollable glee of small children converging upon a wounded piñata with sharp sticks and no blindfolds. After opening weekend, the box office imploded.

The problem is that *Battlefield Earth* is just a little too challenging for the average viewer. To grasp it requires repeated viewings, which, for now, gives considerable advantage to the Scientologists, who

went back over and over. With time, *Battlefield Earth* will be appreciated as a masterpiece. The initial response to it reveals just how severely commodification can distort *Rezeptionsasthetik*. The genius of *Battlefield Earth* will be revealed once it is on TV at three in the morning; then people won't feel pissed off about spending money to see it.

Battlefield Earth displays that unique fusion of simplicity and convolution found in the kind of open-ended saga (often with a faintly Oedipal tinge) that a 5-year-old might tell himself when he is supposed to be taking a nap. The resemblance is strengthened by the name Hubbard gives the hero: Jonnie Goodboy Tyler (Barry Pepper). Jonnie is a member of the remaining tribes of cave-dwelling Caucasians who are what is left of

busy themselves raping Mother Earth through technological operations of some not-very-well-defined nature.

Chief of security is a disgruntled Psychlo named Terl, played by John Travolta (who is obviously having a very good time). Terl's responsibilities include blackmailing fellow Psychlo Forest Whitaker and laughing at his own jokes. Once Jonnie leaves the caves to make his way in the world, he and a couple of other “man-animals” are captured by the Psychlos and imprisoned in subterranean holding pens. (These scenes are murky, and feel like a documentary about hip-pies filmed in a closet.)

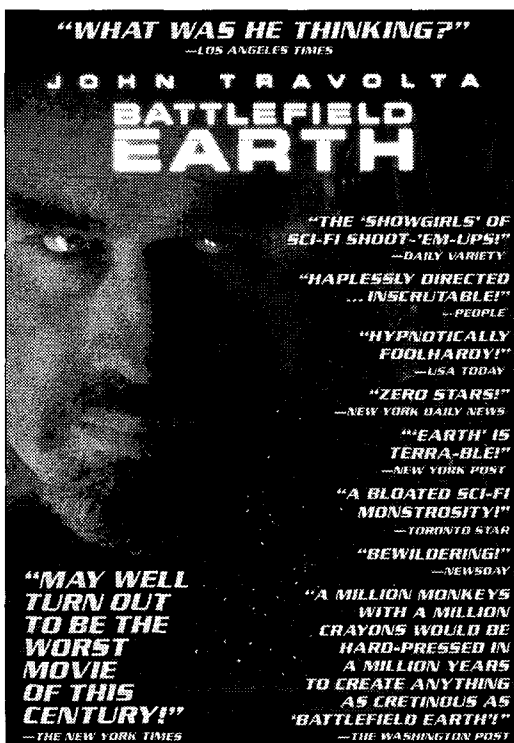
Impressed by the intelligence of rebellious Jonnie, Terl decides to experiment using man-animals for skilled labor. He straps Jonnie into an unused dentist's chair (the aliens having long since abandoned oral hygiene) and blasts him with a concentrated ray of Pure Knowledge. In short order, Jonnie speaks fluent Psychlonese and begins offering his peers introductory

lectures in trigonometry and molecular biology. They gaze at him in wonder, and he becomes their unquestioned leader, which only seems fair.

Terl then takes Jonnie to one of the larger branches of the Denver Public Library—and leaves him there, in the ruins, to contemplate the futility of resisting the Psychlo empire. This scene is what Aristotle called *perepetia*: a moment of reversal in the plot. For by the time Terl returns, Jonnie is examining a reproduction of the Declaration of Independence.

At this point, about an hour into *Battlefield Earth*, the slenderest threads of coherence and plausibility are finally brushed away. We suddenly learn what the Psychlos are doing on Earth: mining gold! Fortunately they never noticed Fort Knox. So Johnny and his friends have no trouble meeting their work quota.

Meanwhile, they concentrate on learning to fly thousand-year-old fighter jets, and soon master the post-Einsteinian technology necessary to transport a bomb across the intergalactic void to destroy Planet Psychlo on the first try.



humanity in the year 3000, following Earth's colonization by evil invaders called the Psychlos: a mildew-covered race of beings who are nine feet tall, dreadlocked, have six fingers and wear codpieces. They are terribly greedy, and

The cavepeople greet each new challenge by declaring it a "piece of cake": a haunting idiom, since they have spent the last few centuries as hunter-gatherers. The closing scene shows Terl caged by the earthlings—in a vault at Fort Knox. Which is kind of ironic, see, because he's so greedy. A sequel looms.

Gertrude Stein once said of Picasso that all great masterpieces look a little ugly at first and become beautiful with time, though serious appreciation requires the effort to see them in their original hideousness. Clearly the people who walked out of *Battlefield Earth* in droves were not up to the demands that a cinematic creation this overwhelming can make.

A few defenders have tried to portray critics of the movie as artsy-fartsy snobs, unable to enjoy entertainment meant to appeal to the mass audience. But this is exactly backward. Like some daring performance artist, *Battlefield Earth* insults the audience—particularly its intelligence. It violates pedestrian norms of "logic," "willing suspension of disbelief" or "fun." It steals your money, then defies you to ask for it back. Quite unpleasant to experience, it proves surprisingly enjoyable to discuss.

To be sure, John Travolta makes appreciating *Battlefield Earth* that much more difficult by regularly denying that the film has anything to do with Scientology. He claims that Hubbard was an important science-fiction writer long before turning his attention to spiritual matters. Like most statements about the great man by his disciples, this contains a kernel of half-truth.

Starting out in pulp fiction during the '30s, Hubbard became legendary for a technique later used by Jack Kerouac in composing *On the Road*: He would feed a roll of butcher paper into his typewriter, then just crank out yarns-by-the-yard. He was prolific. At a penny a word, he had to be. And he possessed a vividness and fecundity of the imagination often confused with pathological dishonesty.

At various times, Hubbard persuaded people that he was a pioneering atomic physicist and rocket scientist, a naval war hero, a secret agent and the only white man ever made an honorary blood-brother of the Blackfoot Indians. He claimed to have taught himself an

ancient Oriental language (which required one night of hard study) and also to have written the original screenplay for the classic movie *Stagecoach* (though presumably not that same evening). Some have called him deceptive for claiming a Ph.D. even though he dropped out of college as an undergraduate. But Hubbard bought that diploma fair and square, and he had to go all the way to the post office to pick it up.

Before *Dianetics*, L. Ron Hubbard used to tell his pulp fiction colleagues that the real money was in founding a religion.

During the '40s, he became interested in theology, of a sort. He dabbled in the ritual magic practiced by followers of Aleister Crowley—today the favorite late-Victorian author of heavy-metal Satanists—whose slogan was, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law." At professional gatherings, Hubbard often complained about cranking out stories for pulp magazines: The real money, he figured, was in founding a religion. (The Church of Scientology has denied this with all due vigor; but many of his pulp fiction colleagues recall him saying it, not once but several times.)

By 1950, he had concocted a sort of do-it-yourself psychotherapy. According to *Dianetics*, various problems in body and mind come from the reactivation of "engrams"—that is, bad memories recorded in the "reactive mind," which exists from the moment of conception on. The reactive mind is extremely stupid. Take the case of a person suffering from an inflammation of the backside. Hubbard discovered that during pregnancy the individual's mother kept asking the father for aspirin. The reactive mind stored this

phonetically, as "ass burn." Hence the rash! Removing this software bug, which took a few hours of work, cured everything. People who reached the engram-free state of "clear" would have perfect memory, high IQ and better health.

For a while, dianetics became a big fad in the United States. It combined a B-movie approximation of psychoanalysis with lots of bookkeeping imagery. A dianetic "auditor" used Hubbard's techniques on the engram "bank" to "clear" it (the latter being office slang for resetting an adding machine to zero). Talking about unpleasant memories, real and imaginary, gave practitioners a sort of buzz. Hubbard continued his research into this exciting new field of study; within a few years, his findings were so comprehensive as to form a whole new religion. Or so he told the Internal Revenue Service. His organization took on a paramilitary structure—including its own navy, with Hubbard as the commander—and cultivated its ties with celebrities, with some success. By the time Hubbard left this earth in 1986, Scientology possessed considerable funds and real estate. It also has a fairly byzantine internal bureaucracy—and a jargon so peculiar and self-referential as to defy translation.

Which brings us back to *Battlefield Earth*. When the novel finally went from development hell and into regular Hollywood production, some feared that a blockbuster hit would lead to new recruits for Hubbard's organization. That worry plainly proved misguided. Nor does it turn out that *Battlefield Earth* is a sci-fi Trojan horse, with covert bits of Scientology hidden in it. In fact, the



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reverse is true. The basic aspects of Hubbard's belief system are quite out in the open, to a bewildering degree.

For as would-be "clears" learn, not all of the engrams giving humans trouble are of strictly terrestrial origin. Scientologists who audit diligently enough (paying as they go) are allowed to study Hubbard's secret writings about numerous invasions by conspiratorial aliens—for example, those from the dreaded Marcab confederacy. Those with advanced expertise in Hubbard's technology are able to undo the effects of the most traumatic experience in known history: the atrocities

committed, a few billion years ago, by evil cosmic overlord Xenu, the dictator from planet Teegeeack.

Now, in some respects, Xenu did resemble Terl, the villain in *Battlefield Earth*, except that he was even meaner. It is also important to note that the movie is strictly a work of fiction—while the insane power-lust of Xenu was altogether too real, as John Travolta well knows. The actor, being an advanced practitioner, must have spent countless hours working through the horrors of Xenu's reign. A laborious process, but worth it, once you get the amazing powers.

All of which bears keeping in mind to appreciate *Battlefield Earth*. So many people have criticized the movie as propaganda for a goofy cult. Even more have laughed at it as the vanity project of an actor who (like Hubbard in his prime) has not heard the word "no" in quite some time. But we happy few know better. Not all of the film's pleasures derive from grotesque incompetence alone. Viewed in the right spirit, *Battlefield Earth* is an almost unbelievably cruel satire of Scientology—as though Hubbard were taunting his own followers from beyond the grave. ■

All Things New

By Eugene McCarraher

Near the tragic end of a life spent marking the utopian promises of mass culture, Walter Benjamin identified religion as the most plentiful treasure of revolutionary hope. Declaring the bankruptcy of "progress" in several "theses on the philosophy of history," he

his theses point to the broader history of the Marxist left's critique of religion, an enterprise whose ambivalence originated with Marx himself. While "opiate of the people" is a nice polemical shot, "heart of a heartless world" and "soul of soulless conditions" convey more reliably the full range and complexity of Marx's thoughts on religion. In his youthful work, Marx explored both the opiate and the critical qualities of religion with a deftness obscured by his talent for the caustic line. (Marx later began his discussion of commodity fetishism in *Capital* by noting, only partly in sarcasm, that the commodity form "abounds in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties.")

Marx's heirs played variations on the master's theme. Karl Kautsky drew parallels between the early Christians and revolutionary socialists, while Antonio Gramsci consulted the history of Italian Catholicism for lessons in hegemony. Some of the most incandescent passages in Ernst Bloch's *Principle of Hope* explore the "anticipatory consciousness" contained in Judaism and Christianity. Theodor Adorno (whose dissertation director, Paul Tillich, became one of the century's greatest Protestant theologians) echoed Benjamin in *Minima Moralia*. "Contemplate all things as they would present themselves from the standpoint of redemption," he wrote; see the world "as indigent and distorted as it will appear one day in the messianic light."

And in perhaps the most impressive Marxist study of religion, *The Hidden God*, Lucien Goldmann both interpreted the malaise of the *noblesse de robe* and linked together St. Augustine, Pascal and Marx in a lineage of tragic thought on human nature and destiny.

With religion shaken but still alive and even vibrant, and with the socialist ideal

The Fragile Absolute—Or, Why Is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting For?

By Slavoj Zizek
Verso
182 pages, \$25

warned his comrades that their secular conception of history as a passage through "empty time" stifled the moral imagination they would need to defeat the sinister interests of the earth. Benjamin hinted that religion possessed moral and intellectual resources sorely needed on the left, and that revolution would mean a break with the past far greater than anyone imagined. He broached a view of history as a tale of redemption, a story in which the forces of production and power were accompanied and occasionally ruptured by forces of some other kind.

Of course, Benjamin's turn to theology could have been a desperate move in the face of fascism, or the dead end of an ideological *flaneur* who was never a real materialist anyway. (Who knows, he may have been smoking hash again.) But



RICHARD SYLVANES

Slavoj Zizek

in apparently irreparable ruin, Goldmann's suggestion that the left had much to learn from the hopeful yet unsentimental outlook of theology seems more timely than ever. As the corporate order commodifies and increasingly manufactures our imaginative resistance, is it really just a sign of exhaustion or folly to look to religion for wisdom, if not for faith? Is it the secular hope of the left that has now become archaic?

So perhaps it's an epiphany when Verso, cousin of *New Left Review*, publishes Slavoj Zizek's *The Fragile Absolute*,

a book on "why the Christian legacy is worth fighting for." A prolific author, electrifying lecturer and senior researcher at the Institute for Social Studies in Ljubljana, Slovenia, Žižek is an academic rock star in a constellation of Eastern European intellectuals that includes Adam Michnik, Slavenka Drakulić and Václav Havel. (Profiled not long ago in an admiring *Lingua Franca* piece, Žižek also figures in more than 1,600 Web sites, achieving a bona fide postmodern celebrity.) But while Havel, for one, affirms a liberal democratic humanism that gets him on the *New York Times* opinion page, Žižek writes in a creole of Marxism, Lacanian psychoanalysis and phenomenology.

If Žižek's lexicon is formidable, his erudition is wide and frenetically dispersed. Like other pomo virtuosos, he can write prose that gives anything but *jouissance*, but he can also enliven everything he touches as he ricochets from his beloved Lacan to Hitchcock to Levi-Strauss to the Marx Brothers. This dazzle has its price: after detours through Marx, Lacan, Hegel and other big names, numerous mini-reviews of Fellini, Spielberg and Kieslowski, and several gratuitous volleys at multiculturalism, we finally get to the "Christian legacy" three-fifths of the way through the book. But Žižek deserves our perseverance, for his mission is nothing less than the intellectual and moral reconstruction of the left, a project that, he contends, demands a serious and even humbling reappraisal of Christianity. "There is a direct lineage from Christianity to Marxism," he argues, and rediscovering it is an urgent ideological and political task.

While Žižek won't be getting baptized soon (elsewhere he has avowed both atheism and a special antipathy to Catholicism), he has been tracing an accelerating trajectory of theological reflection, much of it quite astute even when rendered in Lacanian verbiage. In *The Metastases of Enjoyment* (1994), he rued that the death of God, in signaling "the dissolution of symbolically constituted reality," also endangered belief in any reality outside the self. In *The Plague of Fantasies* (1997), he asserted the homology of Lacanian theory and Christian theology. Lacan's formulation

of psychic history as an Edenic, polymorphous condition (the "imaginary" or "mirror stage") followed by a prodigal sojourn of desire through the land of slipping signifiers, reproduced in secular terms "the problematic of the Fall." And in *The Ticklish Subject* (1999) Žižek anointed St. Paul as a herald of revolutionary subjectivity, of a self grounded in a "positive, affirmative attitude of Love" that negates the repressive symbolic order and augurs a "New Beginning."

In his new book, Žižek surveys the global corporate imperium and its attendant specters: a resurgence of nationalism; a "massive onslaught of obscurantism" spearheaded by pop psychology, New Age, and Christian and Islamic fundamentalism; the bogusly permissive consumer cultures of the West that numb political consciousness and will. But he repudiates

Without some vision of freedom, prisoners will always conceive their "liberation" in terms provided by the wardens.

the classic Marxist account of their abolition. "Marxist Communism is an impossible fantasy" not, as conservatives would have it, because of an intractable human nature, but because Communism is "a fantasy inherent to capitalism itself." Arising out of the class antagonisms endemic to capitalism, the ideal of "pure unleashed productivity" bears the imprint of its origins. If the left wants to abolish capitalism without realizing its own phantasms of repression—the story of state socialism in our century—it must criticize capitalism "without ... communism as its inherent standard."

So Žižek turns to Pauline Christianity for the outlines of a new criticism and politics. From his reading of the epistles, Žižek extracts a Christianity that undermines humanism more radically than any academic postmodernism. By rooting selfhood in a divine order characterized by change, contingency and even "fragility," Christianity relativizes all

identities anchored in the illusory stabilities of race, nation, class, gender or sexuality. In a kindred manner, Žižek argues that the notion of humanity's divine likeness demolishes, rather than establishes, any spurious "humanism": Humans, it reminds us, must answer to some other, higher reality.

Furthermore, Žižek recalls that the New Testament repudiation of "the Law" displays an insight into the mutual implication of law and transgression. Following Paul (by way of Lacan), Žižek argues that since "law itself generates sinful desires," the desire to transgress perpetuates the grip of the law on the violator. Without some vision of freedom outside the given order, the prisoners will always conceive their "liberation" in the terms provided by the wardens. Thus, like the Old Left's romance of Communism, the "transgression" idealized in the precincts of pomo will always bear the traces of repression, and will never be enough to topple and emancipate. (In a very different idiom, *The Baffler's* Thomas Frank's scholarly and critical work provides rich historical evidence for this diabolical ingenuity of capitalist culture.) Paul's unprecedented move was to "cut into the Gordian knot" by "leaving behind the domain of Law itself."

Echoing Benjamin, Žižek implies that the import of Pauline theology for the left lies in its conception of conversion as "the violent intrusion of difference"—the process of "dying to the Law," of discovering desires uncontaminated by the established order. When he opens the book by citing the famous thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, in which Paul sings the praises of charitable love—not the "philanthropic" tossing of scraps to the poor, but the godlike practice of giving without thought of return—Žižek gestures to a moral vision that could never arise from the processes and conflicts of capitalism. Likewise, turning the other cheek radically interrupts "the circular logic of re-establishing balance" that ensures the persistence of violence. And Žižek realizes that charity and *agape*, far from being all sweetness, "family values" and Mother Teresa, can be harsh, divisive virtues that cleave friends, neighbors, nations and families. Jesus did, after all, claim to bring not peace but a sword.

Yet while, as Žižek recognizes, Pauline

Christianity "necessarily leads to the creation of an alternative community," its political character confounds the conceptualizations of modern radicalism. By compelling converts to, as Žižek puts it, "disengage from the inertia" of ancient social convention, and by opening membership to anyone "irrespective of [one's] place in the social order," Christianity indeed became a "movement"—the popular front of antiquity, so to speak. But it also at least claimed to embody an economy of desires wholly at variance with that of the ancient world; redemption was not "progress" achieved by a social group appealing to possibilities created within an oppressive order. Without guillotines or firing squads (vestiges, that is, of the old regime), Christianity truly "wip[es] the slate clean" as the condition of the New Beginning."

For all his receptivity to the Christian legacy (displayed in a critical engagement that surpasses any condescending "respect for religion"), Žižek can't effect his own rupture with the secular left. The

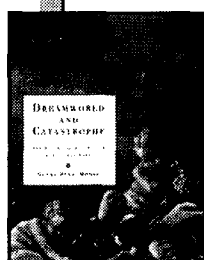
result is a baffling, unsatisfying conclusion that nonetheless highlights the audacity of his theological tour de force. Enchanted by Jesus and Paul but beholden to Lacan and Marx, Žižek backs away from the irreducibly theological and religious questions raised by his defense of the Christian legacy, and beckons instead toward "psychoanalytic and revolutionary political collectives" as the acolytes of a secular "new beginning."

And yet he inserts the thought that these collectives would represent, in some way, "the Holy Ghost itself." Clearly taken with the notion of a fragile and loving yet abundant and powerful Absolute—with the idea, that is, of the Christian God—Žižek seems poised but reluctant to explore connections among ontology, metaphysics and politics that leftist intellectuals have usually evaded or dismissed. I suspect that, having reached the farthest horizon of secular social thought and rediscovered matters long ago banished to oblivion, Žižek fears the forfeiture of his credentials as a leftist in good standing. It's unfortunate that he aborts this opportunity to redefine the left's critical vocation,

for his bracing speculations hint at the relevance, even the indispensability, of theology to critical theory.

If the history of the left has been a succession of "new lefts," the next one should launch a ruthless critique of the secularity that leavens both capitalism and its putative opposition. After perusing the texts of the old reliables, they should discover another company of comrades: Paul Tillich, Karl Barth, Martin Buber, the Niebuhr brothers, the Catholic Worker movement, and the bizarre, penetrating Simone Weil, whose essays of the '30s and '40s anticipated many of Žižek's concerns. In search of what Martin Luther King once called a "marvelous new militancy," they might conclude that such a thing can come only from some other desire, some other account of history and its destination, some other hope of making all things new. ■

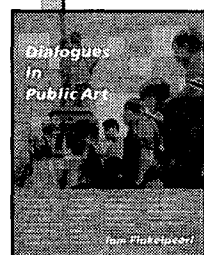
Eugene McCarragher teaches humanities and history at Villanova University. He is the author of *Christian Critics: Religion and the Impasse in Modern American Social Thought* (Cornell).



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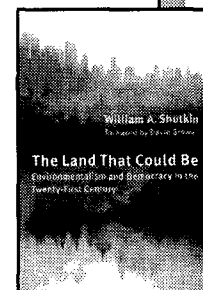
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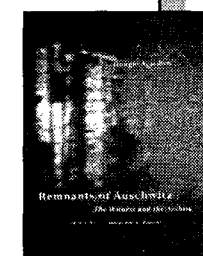
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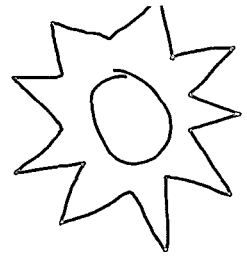
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Summer Reading



Lost History

Readers who enjoy Juan Gonzalez's "Forgotten America" column should pick up **Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America** (Viking, \$27.95), which is not so much a story of what is forgotten as what was never learned.

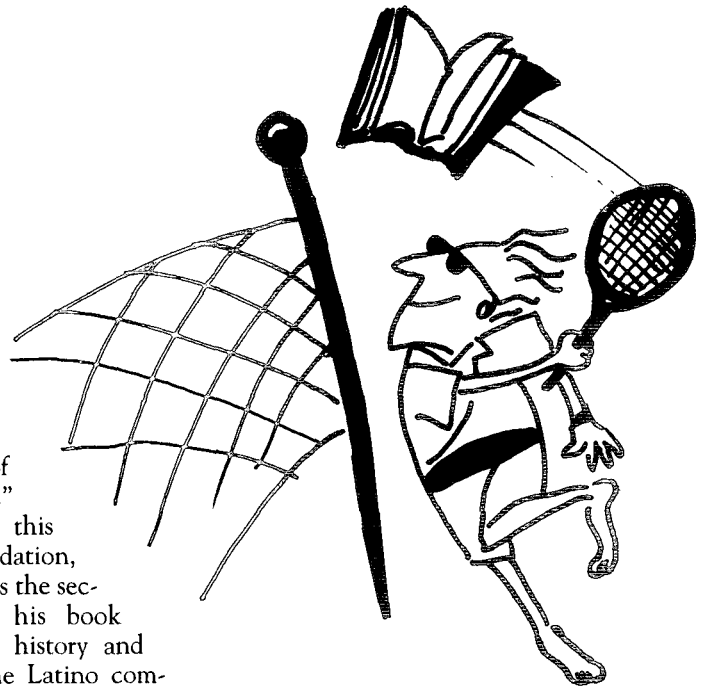
This primer—and Gonzalez's ever-enjoyable prose—grabs the reader and fills in the gaps left by a traditional American history education. Gonzalez recounts the history of the European invasion that decimated the Amerindian culture and people—an estimated 58 million native people died in the first 100 years of the conquest. In the English colonies, within 50 years of the Plymouth landing, about 90 percent of the native people perished.

But Gonzalez also provides a cultural history of two empires—the English and Spanish—and their transformation over the centuries into the two dominant New World societies, the Anglo-American and Latin American. "Latin America became a land of social inclusion and political exclusion," he writes. "English America welcomed all political and religious views but remained deeply intolerant in its social and racial attitudes. Latin America, subsumed by the force of its Indian and African majority, became a land of spirit, song, and suffering among its masses, its elite living a parasitic existence on immense estates. North America's white settlers, segregated from the races over which they held sway, developed a dual and contradictory identity and worldview: on the one hand, a spirit of will, work, and unwavering optimism among its small farmer masses, on the other, a predilection among its elite for cutthroat

enterprise, land speculation, and domination of the weak and of non-Europeans."

After laying this historical foundation, Gonzalez spends the second third of his book examining the history and sociology of the Latino communities—Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Dominican, Colombian, Panamanian and Central American—that comprise Hispanic America. From there he explores the Latino influence on American politics, the debate over the use of Spanish as an official language, the effect of free trade policies on Latin America and the struggle over immigration policy.

In the last chapter of *Harvest of Empire*, Gonzalez focuses on Puerto Rico, the world's oldest (and one of the last remaining) colony. He sorts through the arguments for statehood, commonwealth and independence—and finds all lacking. Instead, he believes Puerto Rico should combine parts of all three options and follow the example of the Pacific Trust Territories of the United States, which in 1986 chose to become an "associated republic." As such, Puerto Rico would conduct its own foreign policy; those born on the island would have dual citizenship; citizens of either country could emigrate to the other; the two countries would share a common market, common currency and common postal system; and while the United States would be responsible for



the international security of Puerto Rico, U.S. military installations would pay a fair rent. "To generations of Puerto Ricans," he writes, "the psychological benefit that will accompany the end of this netherworld of colonial dependency will be incalculable. For Americans, it would wash away an old and ugly stain on this nation's most cherished ideals."

Gonzalez notes that by the middle of this century, Latinos will become the largest minority in the United States, and by the end of this century could approach one-half of the population. This profound change in the country's ethnic makeup is not a change to fear. "Ours ... is not some armed *reconquista* seeking to throw out Anglo occupiers from sacred lands that were once Latino," Gonzalez writes. "It is a search for survival, for inclusion on an equal basis, nothing more. It is a search grounded in the belief that, five hundred years after the experiment began, we are all Americans of the New World, and our most dangerous enemies are not each other but the great wall of ignorance between us."

Joel Bleifuss

Conspiracy Theory

David Corn's nervy thriller *Deep Background* (St. Martin's, \$25.95) evokes subversive early '70s thrillfests like *Three Days of the Condor* and *The Parallax View*, reviving the left-liberal conspiracy narrative that almost disappeared during the Reagan years (except for Oliver Stone, who gave the genre a loopy, post-modern re-injection with *JFK*).

When President Bob Hanover is killed during a White House press conference, the nameless assassin, disguised as a member of the press corps, doesn't leave many clues about motive. Before shooting himself, he says "she knows" and "happy." The letter M, pierced by a dagger, is also discovered tattooed to his chest. The official line on the assassination is that the killer was a lone, government-hating white supremacist.

But Nick Addis, Hanover's brilliant and devoted young aide—who had been charged with trying to clean up (or cover up, he wonders) some messy business involving the First Lady and land deals in Louisiana—is drawn into the murky, unofficial assassination investigation, which leads him through the murderous undergrowth of U.S. politics. He is joined by Julia Lancette, a CIA analyst, and Clarence Dunne, the disgraced White House chief of security, neither of whom believe the official version—and who have curious leads that point to, well, a conspiracy.

Soon those leads end up dead, and the trio learn of a sinister, off-the-books government hit squad that might be linked to the assassination. Meanwhile, above ground it's business as usual: There are

China trade deals to pass, and the new President Mumfries has his eyes on re-election, while Hanover's widow also covets the party nomination.

Though pastiche, technofear and post-Cold War ennui now mark the progeny of *Three Days of the Condor*, the virtue of Corn's narrative is that it has some of the groovy paranoid style that marked the early genre classics while playfully showing us the lay—and the lies—of the land around D.C.

Corn, *The Nation's* Washington editor, gives the novel extra flavor and fun with various Beltway and extra-Beltway subcultures and supporting characters he unleashes on the protagonists. But the heart of *Deep Background's* darkness is part parable, part *roman à clef* about those young idealistic liberals who invested in the Clintonesque "vital center" only to end up having their consciences stained.

Carl Bromley

Party On

Luis Gabriel Aguilera, author of the coming-of-age barrio tale *Gabriel's Fire* (University of Chicago Press, \$22), refuses to be labeled a "Chicano writer." He prefers "human writer."

Aguilera's book does focus on the intricacies and experiences of a Mexican immigrant growing up in one of Chicago's Latino-Polish neighborhoods. And he isn't afraid to talk about this experience: the culture clash between him and his parents, the economic struggles of immigrants, the racial tension between Latinos and white students in the schools. But the

vulnerability Aguilera exposes in his youthful persona allows the book to transcend the token Latino narrative and become an informative and often humorous memoir about a boy growing up.

As a teen in the '80s, Aguilera was tapped to join the Ultimate Party Crew, a group of teens occupied with partying and music. Various mentors helped Aguilera become an expert in mixing records, dancing and throwing parties, which he continues today with a self-made music production company called Full Spectrum.

Aguilera shows the relative innocence of the party crews: He nervously sweats before his first party; elsewhere he explains to a friend's mother how a window got broken during a bash at her house. But the party crew boys are acutely aware of the existence of more violent gangs—they constantly plan how to avoid them, with varying degrees of success. At the same time Aguilera is winning high school fame and girls with his Ultimate Party Crew jacket, he is also learning more serious life lessons as an assistant to Father Tom, a local priest. Under Tom's influence, he ruminates about his relationship with God and sex.

As a writer, Aguilera successfully revisits that time when the young mind ricochets from sophistication to naïveté, hardness to softness, perspective to self-centeredness. Much of the book is street-level dialogue, with poetic spurts of descriptive prose mixed in. Aguilera's book leaves one with a sense of what it means to be a young person carving a place for himself in society. The thoughts recorded here are touchingly accurate wisps of a young man striving for meaning and identity.

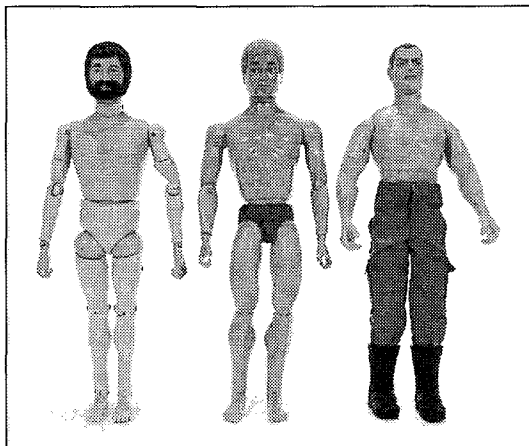
Kari Lydersen

Life or Debt

Randall Robinson's *The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks* (E.P. Dutton, \$23.95) is a passionate polemic that argues the U.S. government must pay economic reparations to the descendants of enslaved Africans and their African-American progeny.

Reconstruction-era Radical Republicans first provoked the discussion of reparations with their proposal to award freed men with property, to help give them a

From *The Adonis Complex: The Secret Crisis of Male Body Obsession* (The Free Press, \$25). Through the years, the evolution of GI Joe—and male action toys in general—has mirrored popular culture's peculiar fascination with male muscle mass. The two dolls on the left are from 1964 and 1974, respectively. If the 1991 doll on the right were 5' 10", he would have a waist of 29 inches and biceps of 16 inches.



stake in a country steeped in white supremacy. But throughout most of the 20th century, the issue withered on the vine, taken up only on the radical fringes of black nationalism; the issue has been resolutely ignored by most civil rights organizations.

But now that is changing thanks to Robinson, a civil rights leader who helped spearhead the U.S. campaign against South African apartheid in the '80s. *The Debt* is a passionate, sometimes eloquent plea for a new understanding of our racial status quo. He writes: "Anywhere from ten to twenty-five million Africans died in slave ships en route from Africa to the Americas. A lifetime of bondage awaited those who survived the passage. This massive crime against humanity—the enslavement and exploitation of tens of millions of human beings—is an American holocaust. Yet one can scour the commemorative architecture of the nation's capital and find little evidence that America's racial holocaust ever occurred." Our cultural aversion to the tragedy of slavery also prevents us from addressing contemporary problems.

These days, conservatives like to enlist Martin Luther King Jr. in the crusade to dismantle affirmative action, selectively quoting the "I Have a Dream" speech. But Michael Eric Dyson has cleared the air with *I May Not Get There with You: The True Martin Luther King, Jr.* (The Free Press, \$25). Dyson's book is a much-needed clarification of an important historical figure, making it clear that King not only supported affirmative action, but also most likely would have supported the renewed call for racial reparations.

Dyson, a coveted academic superstar now teaching at DePaul University in Chicago, hasn't composed just another hagiographical account of this venerated African-American leader. Heavy in substance, crackling with insight and deepened by Dyson's pop-cultural references, *I May Not Get There with You* is intellectual anti-freeze.

Salim Muwakkil

Branded

Canadian journalist Naomi Klein's energetic meander through the world of global mega-brand consumer prod-

uct marketing is sufficiently enjoyable to qualify as summer entertainment for readers settling back into their Nike shorts, with a Starbucks frappuccino in hand. But *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies* (Picador, \$28) is also serious reportage on how global corporations are remaking culture in their own image—and the price that is paid, mainly by often distant sweatshop workers, but also by legions of temporary and part-time sales and shipping clerks in companies like Wal-Mart, Gap and UPS. It also chronicles how a global movement against these corporations is emerging from different strands



of protest, from campaigns against sweatshops to artistic culture jammers. Klein's oddly titled book starts with the proposition that the central phenomenon of the past decade is the rising power of the corporate brand, not simply as a label to identify products, but as the symbol of a lifestyle, the embodiment of longed-for experiences (including nostalgia for a world destroyed by corporations) and personal identity (including creation of the idea of the global teenager as the prime market). Like social critic Thomas Frank, she details how companies attempt to define—or at least capture—hipness, market it expansively and expensively, and attempt to take over public space as well as private consciousness. But the more heavily corporations rely on this inflated brand identity, she argues, the more vulnerable they become to consumer revolts—

and anything that might sully their literally precious image.

At times she overreaches with her analysis of life inside the logo, contending that the pursuit of corporate brand domination accounts for global sweatshops, permatemp workers and a wide range of social ills. But while the corporate branding strategy she criticizes is growing, it still accounts for a modest chunk of all economic activity. Also, there are more powerful forces than branding that account for the shift toward greater corporate irresponsibility toward workers.

While she starts with a cultural critique of brands, Klein shifts toward a social critique of how products are made. Initially, she seems sympathetic to groups such as the guerrilla subverters of corporate billboards or the consumer campaigns against companies like Nike, Gap and Shell. But eventually Klein concludes that the real hope for a movement against global corporations lies less in voluntary corporate codes, monitoring and consumer vigilance—and more in organizing workers and government regulation of corporate behavior.

While that seems to me the right conclusion, there is an odd disjuncture between that and her cultural analysis that needs to be bridged, just as there is a need to forge closer links between those largely youthful cultural protest movements and a global labor movement, about which Klein unfortunately has little to say. But just as protests focus on well-known brands and celebrities have helped to enlarge the movements critical of globalization, Klein's passionate analysis of the brands that dominate people's lives provides an appealing introduction to contemporary abuses of corporate power.

David Moberg

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OBITUARY

DORIS B. FINE
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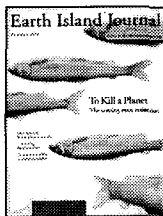
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Lawrence Fine of Cincinnati, Ohio. Doris was a life-long resident of Chicago and participated in many struggles to improve the world, including as a charter member of *In These Times*. Most recently she was active in the League of Womens' Voters in Chicago and the Interfaith Committee for Workers' Justice. Remembrances preferred to the League of Women Voters of Chicago, 332 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 1050, Chicago, IL 60604.

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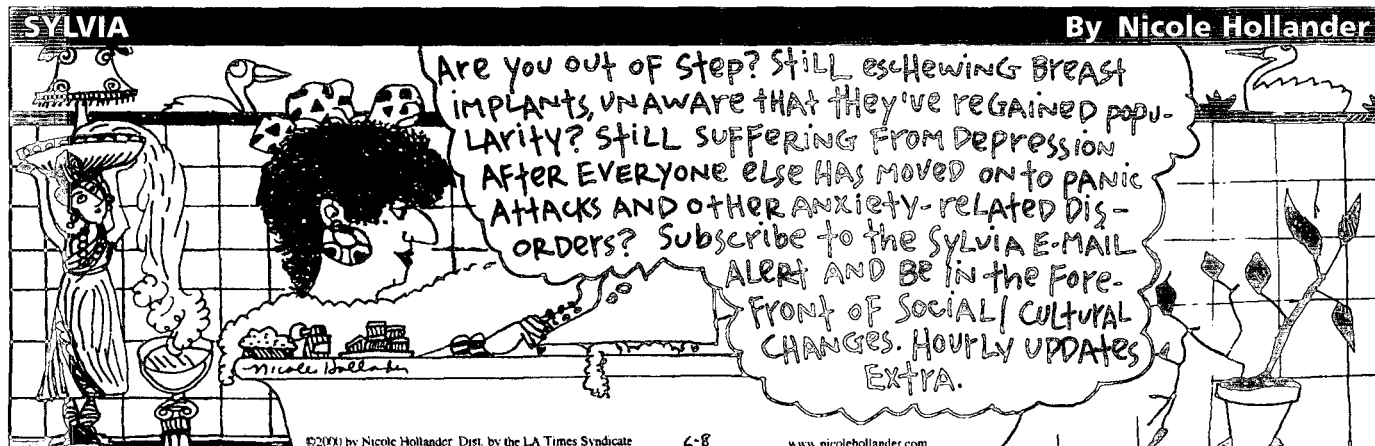
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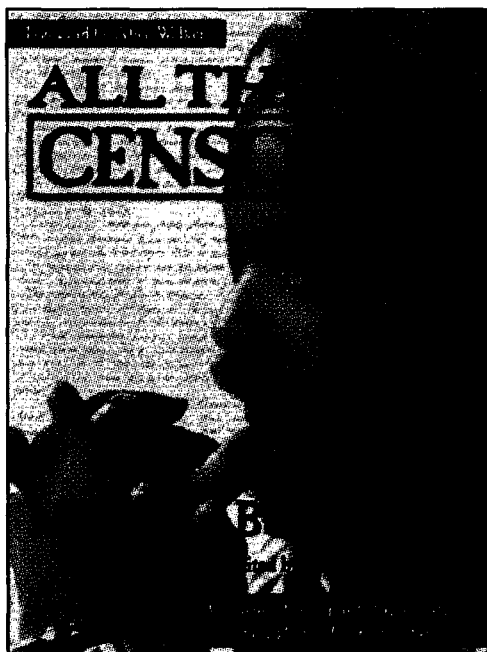
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